



*"The series continues
its revitalized
sense of momentum
and excitement."*

—IGN.com



TIME RUNS OUT

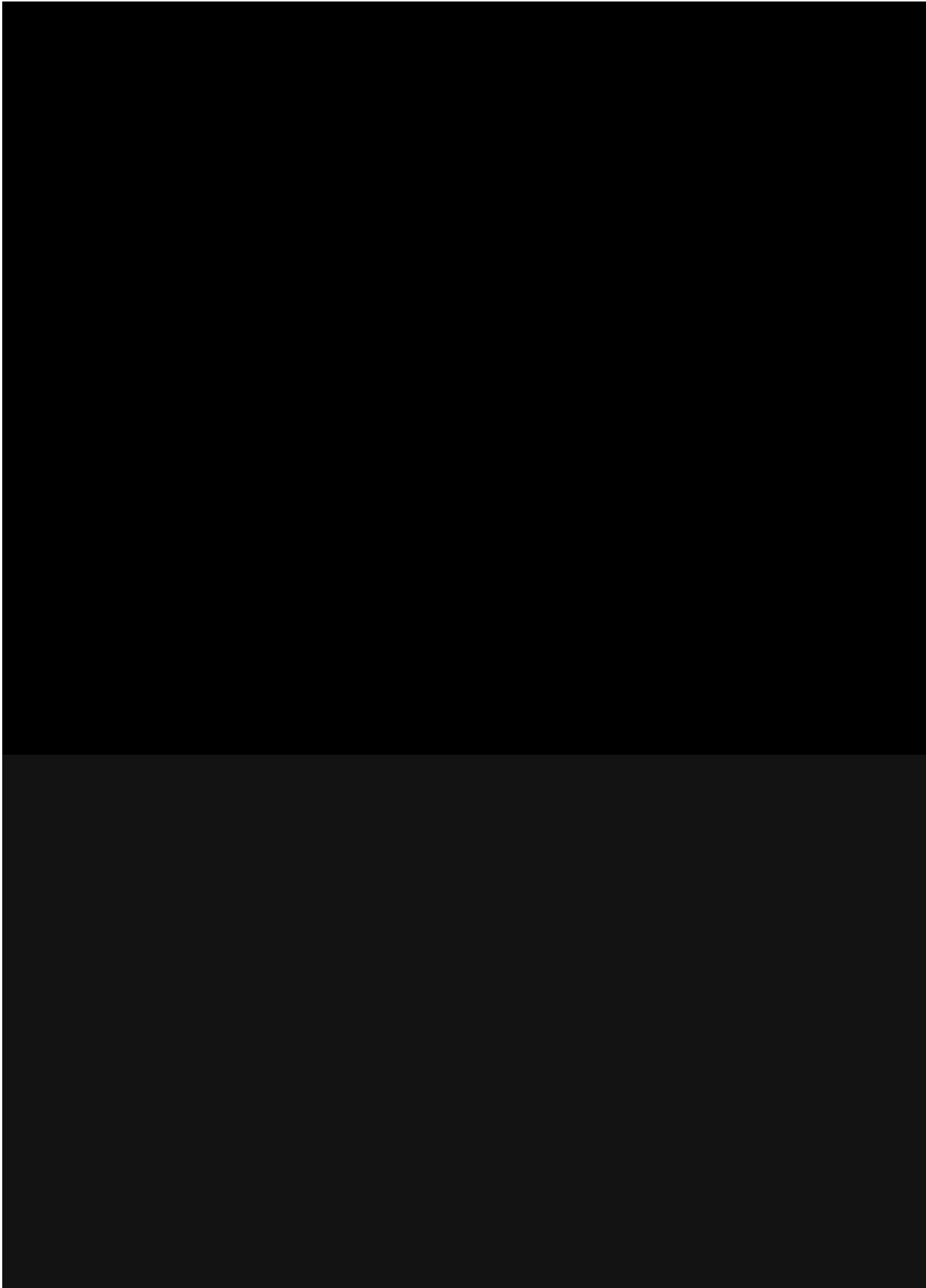
VOLUME TWO

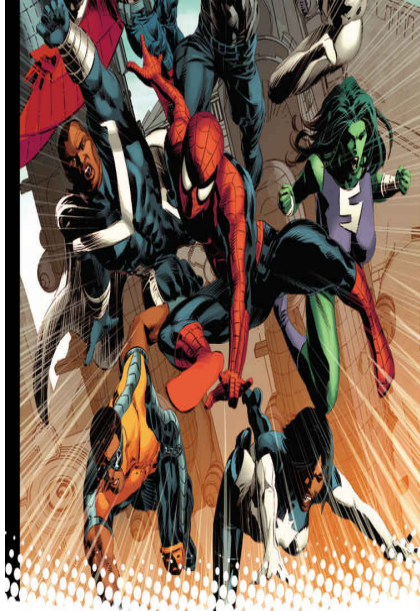
HICKMAN
WALKER
CASELLI

MARVEL
NOW!

KUDRANSKI
DEODATO
PERKINS

AR





"One epic, amazing narrative." —ComicVine.com

IT'S ALL BUILT TO THIS — THE FINAL INCURSION!

After two years of carefully crafting his cataclysmic saga, writer Jonathan Hickman jumps ahead eight months to the grand finale — the day of the Final IncurSION! After the revelation of the Illuminati's desperate, world-destroying actions, the Avengers are fragmented. While one group seeks out the Illuminati for a confrontation, another takes the fight to the new Cabal. Discover what has become of Tony Stark — to say nothing of Dr. Strange! After all the battles, all the sacrifices... still none are prepared for the inevitable moment when time runs out. The second act of the astonishing climax to Jonathan Hickman's legendary run is here!

Collecting *Avengers* (2012) #38-39 and *New Avengers* (2013) #24-28 —
written by Jonathan Hickman, and illustrated by Stefano Caselli,
Mike Deodato Jr., Ken Walker, Gayman Kudrinski and Mike Perkins.



"The series continues
its revitalized
sense of momentum
and excitement." —IGN.com

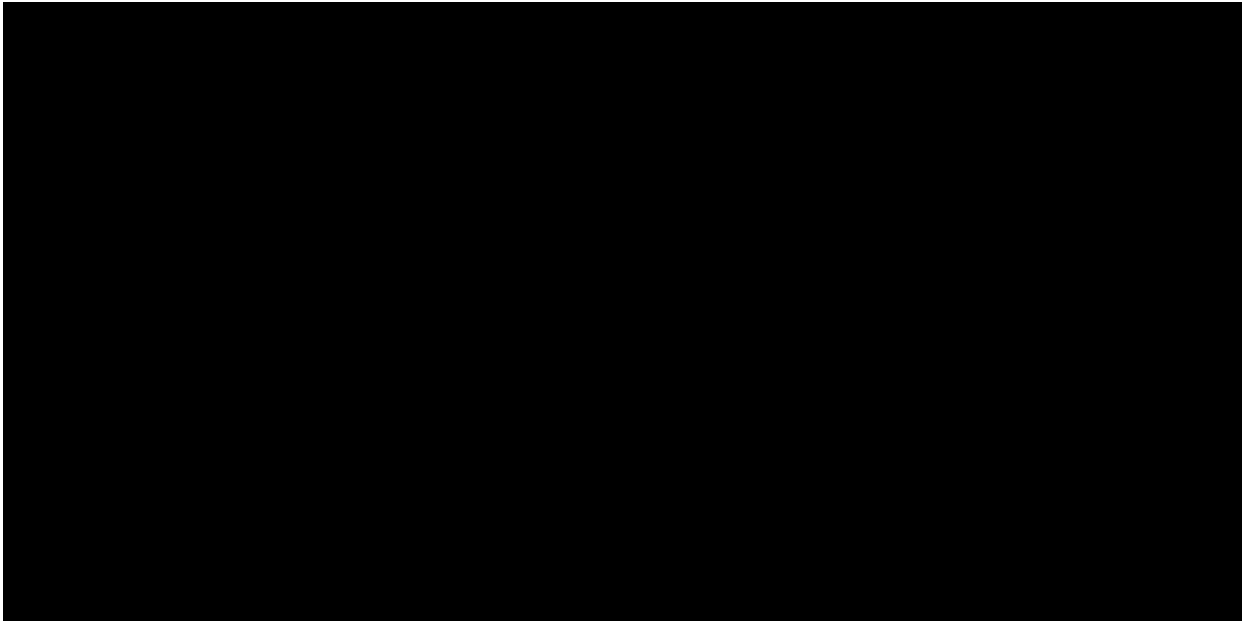
TIME RUNS OUT VOLUME TWO

HICKMAN
WALKER
CASELLI



KUDRANSKI
DEODATO
PERKINS





IN 6 MONTHS ... TIME RUNS OUT!

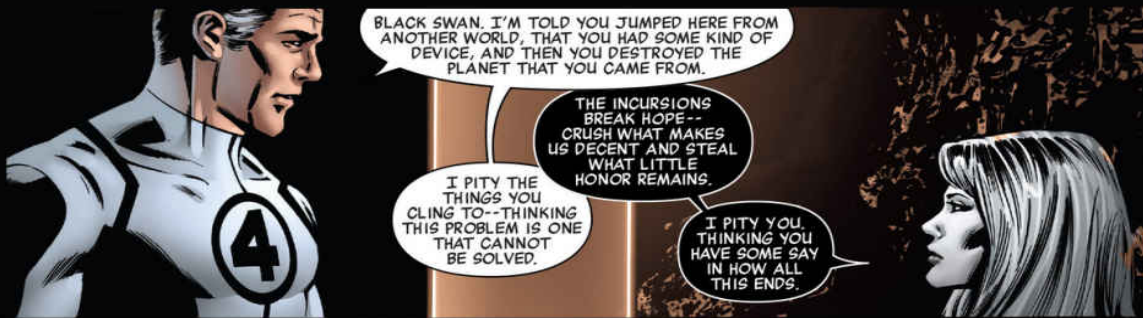


MARVEL

HICKMAN
WALKER
MARTIN

026

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS



BLACK SWAN. I'M TOLD YOU JUMPED HERE FROM ANOTHER WORLD, THAT YOU HAD SOME KIND OF DEVICE, AND THEN YOU DESTROYED THE PLANET THAT YOU CAME FROM.

THE INCURSIONS BREAK HOPE-- CRUSH WHAT MAKES US DECENT AND STEAL WHAT LITTLE HONOR REMAINS.

I PITY THE THINGS YOU CLING TO--THINKING THIS PROBLEM IS ONE THAT CANNOT BE SOLVED.

I PITY YOU. THINKING YOU HAVE SOME SAY IN HOW ALL THIS ENDS.

EIGHT MONTHS LATER



"THE CABAL IS UNMANAGEABLE."



IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS WE HAVE DESTROYED EARTH AFTER EARTH, SAVED SCORES OF UNIVERSES.

BUT THEY HAVE LEARNED TO RELISH ATROCITY.

AND SO, NAMOR, YOU COME TO ME FOR HELP...

I THINK NOT.

DOOM IS NO MAN'S SECOND CHOICE.



THE MAD THINKER HAS FOUND A WAY TO FIND OUT WHO IS BEHIND THIS. NOW I HAVE A PLAN, AND ALL THE PIECES TO BRING IT TO PASS...

...THANKS TO THE MOLECULE MAN!

LET THERE BE SUFFERING AND WOE TO ALL WHO STAND IN MY WAY.



WE FINALLY GOT OUR HANDS ON STARK'S DATA. AT FIRST GLANCE, THE WEAPONS FILES APPEAR TO BE...ROBUST.

WE MAY HAVE LOST TONY--

HE'S NOT LOST. WE JUST HAVEN'T FOUND HIM YET.



THE ILLUMINATI



IRON MAN

THE CABAL



BLACK SWAN



PROXIMA MIDNIGHT



CORVUS GLAIVE



TERRAX



VALERIA RICHARDS



DOCTOR DOOM



BENTLEY-23



THE MAD THINKER



MOLECULE MAN



“CAGES”

WRITER: **JONATHAN HICKMAN**

ARTIST: **KEY WALKER**

INK ASSIST: **SCOTT HANNA**

COLOR ARTISTS: **FRANK MARTIN & DONO SANCHEZ ALMARA**

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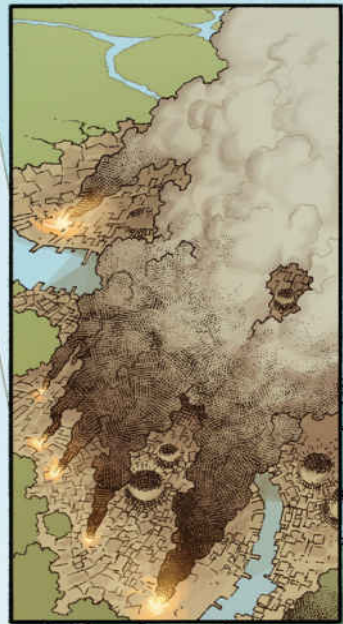
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER: **JOE QUESADA**

PUBLISHER: **DAN BUCKLEY**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: **ALAN FINE**

AVENGERS CREATED BY **STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY**

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NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

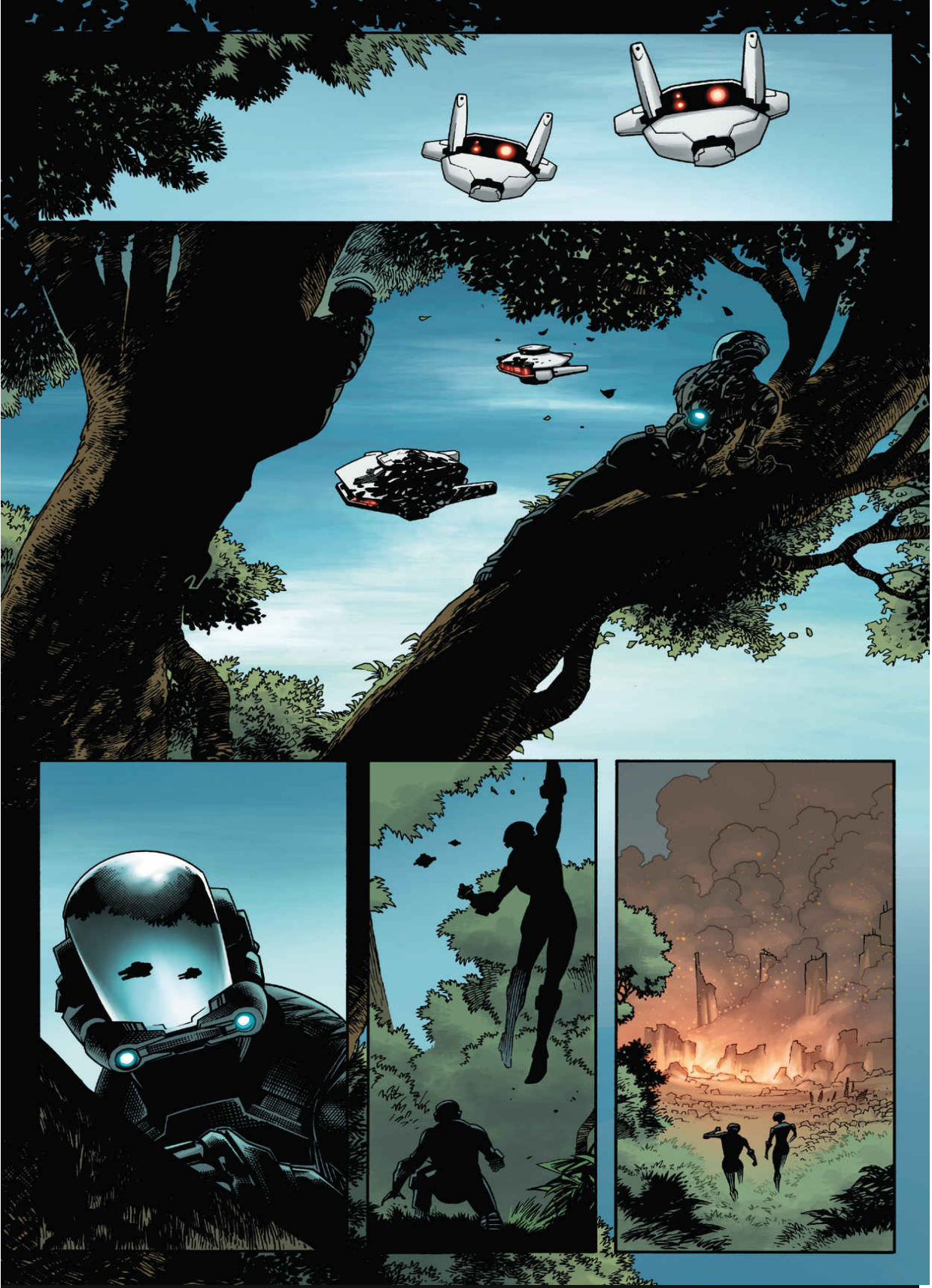




WHICH IS
WHY I DID NOT
BREAK...AND
YOU WILL.



WHO HAVE
YOU EVER
SERVED, ANTHONY,
BEYOND
YOURSELF?



LATVERIA.

BE-DOOP

HELLO?

HELLO,
VALERIA.

UGH!
FINALLY.

WHAT TOOK
YOU SO LONG?
I'VE BEEN SITTING
HERE WAITING
FOR SOM--

IS THAT
DOOM?

TELL HIM I
HAVE SOME BIG IDEAS
WORTH EXPLORING.
TRULY DEVIOUS
STUFF.





HAVE YOU
SPOKEN WITH
YOUR FATHER
ABOUT
THIS?



NO. I THINK
MOM'S PLAYING
THINGS SAFE.

BUT BEFORE
HE DISAPPEARED,
HE GOT ME A COPY
OF ALL HIS DATA. I'VE
STUDIED IT, AND
COME TO SOME
CONCLUSIONS...

I'M
GUESSING BY
NOW HE KNOWS
WHAT THEY
ARE.



HOW
ABOUT YOU,
UNCLE DOOM...
YOU WANNA
KNOW WHAT
I THINK?



YES.

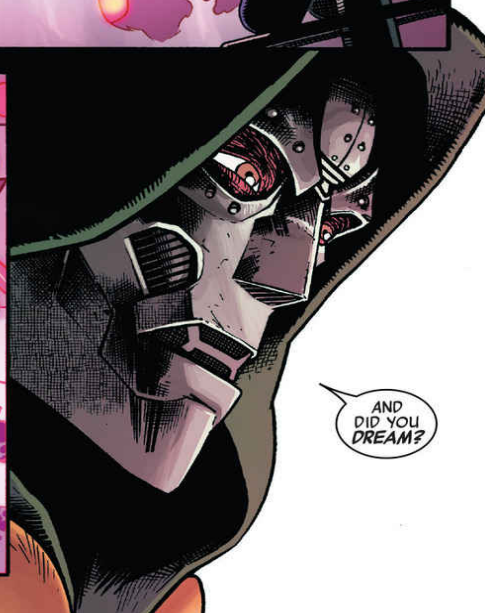
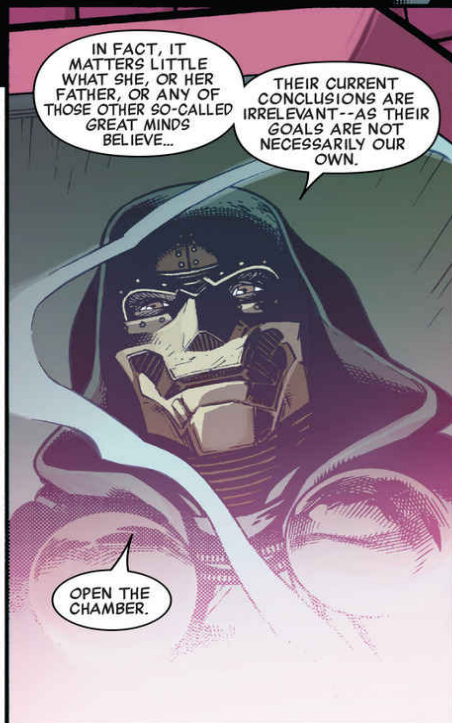
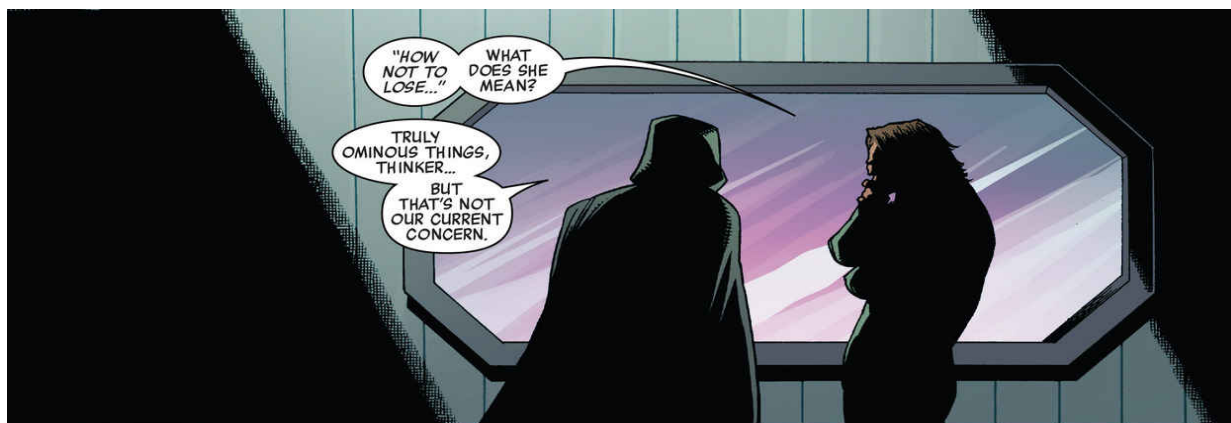


THEN I'LL
TELL YOU THE
SAME THING I
TOLD HIM.

YOU
CAN'T
WIN.



WHAT YOU
HAVE TO DO IS
START FIGURING
OUT HOW NOT
TO LOSE.





NECROPOLIS.

THANOS
IS NOT
PLEASED,
PROXIMA...

HE FINDS
THAT VARIABLES
CHAFE, AND THIS
LATEST ONE--A MOST
COARSE KERNEL OF
ENLIGHTENMENT.

THANOS
FINDS ALL OF
LIVING AN IRRITANT,
CORVUS...FORGIVE ME IF
I DON'T LEAP BEFORE
SO ORDERED.

THIS IS
DIFFERENT. THIS...
CHANGE AT THE
INCURSION
POINTS.

WE'VE
KILLED, WHAT,
DOZENS OF
WORLDS BY
NOW?

FOURTEEN,
HUSBAND, FOURTEEN
RIGHTEOUS AND
GLORIOUS
ANNIHILATIONS.

AND EACH
TIME, AS SOON AS
THE WORLD IS GONE,
THE INCURSION POINT
COLLAPSES.

BUT NOW,
ACCORDING TO OUR
MASTER, IT LINGERS--
NOT LONG, BUT ENOUGH
FOR THANOS TO
CATALOG.

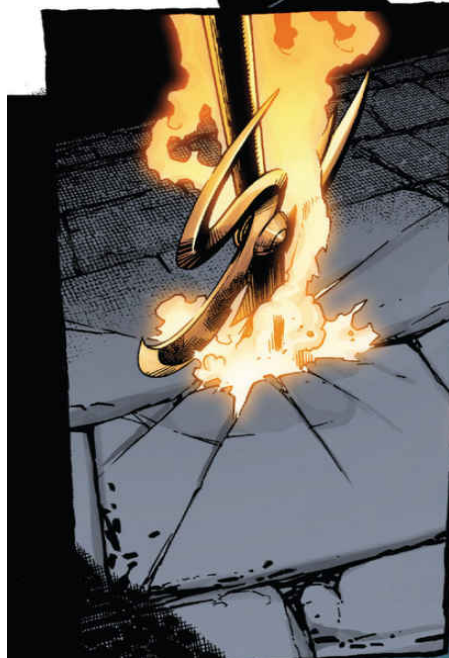
SO?

THAT
PERIOD OF TIME
IS EXPANDING.
THANOS BELIEVES
THAT--
HOLD.



WHAT...?

I THOUGHT...
I WAS CERTAIN
THAT...THERE WAS
SOMEONE...



AND
APPARENTLY
I WAS
WRONG.

JUMPY.
LIKE A HURR
IN WATER.

HRMPT.

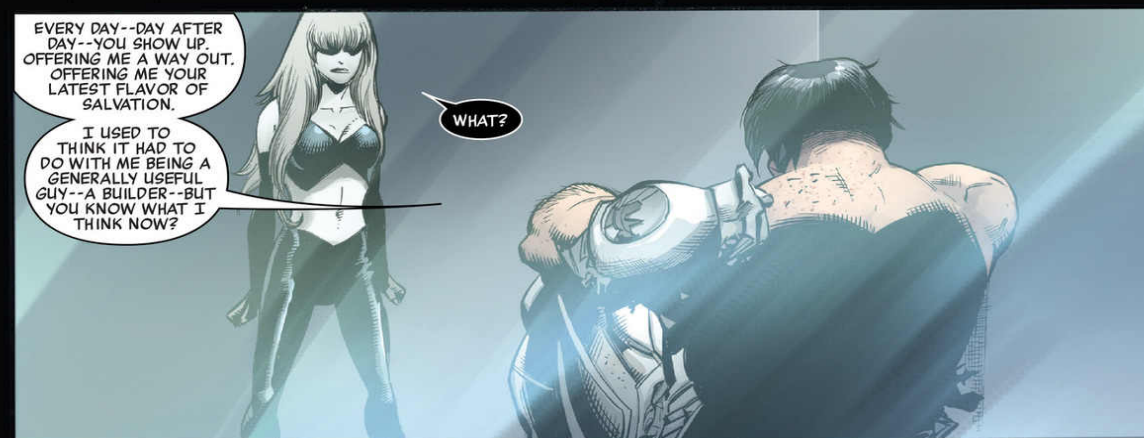
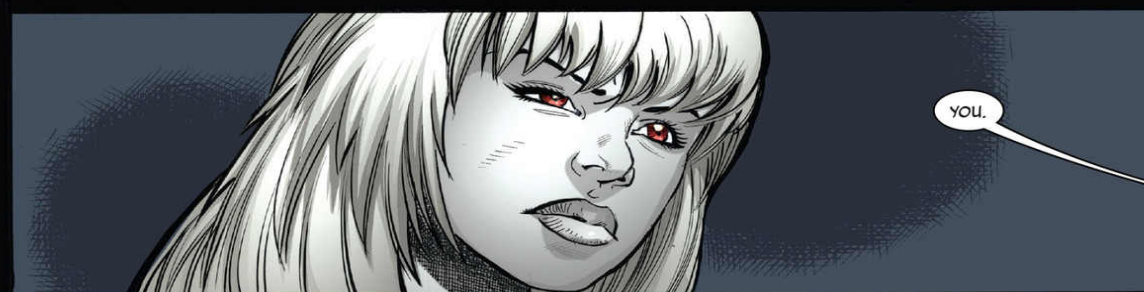


SO...
EXPANSION.

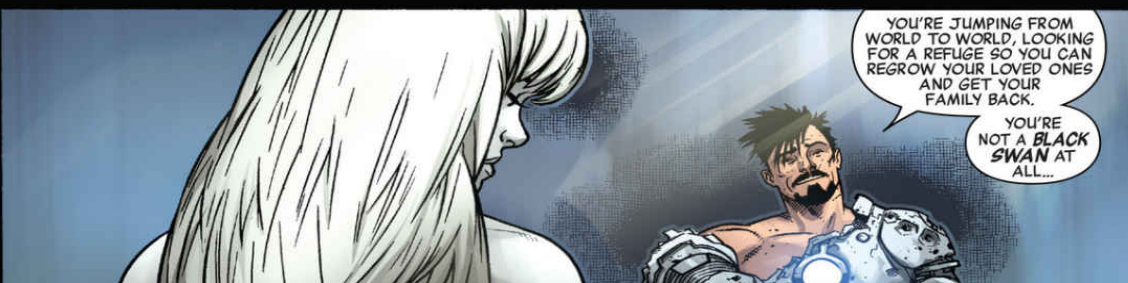
YES. THANOS
SAYS THE CONCERN IS
FOUND IN THE CONNECTIVE
TISSUE--WHAT LINGERS
SHOULD NOT EXIST--AND
THEN HE BEGINS TO RAMBLE
ON ABOUT BUBBLES
OF OTHER...



"DESPAIR..."







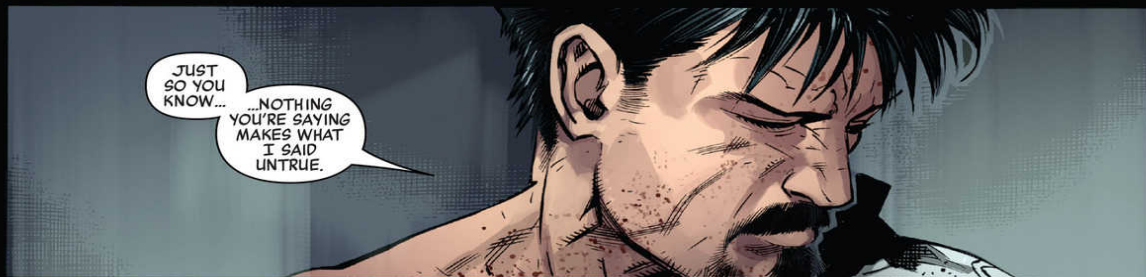


"WHEN YOU TRIED
TO SAVE THE
LIVES OF THOSE
ALREADY LOST."

"I WATCHED
YOU FALL."



AND THEN
THEY PUT YOU
HERE...IN THIS
CAGE.



JUST
SO YOU
KNOW...
...NOTHING
YOU'RE SAYING
MAKES WHAT
I SAID
UNTRUE.



I
SUPPOSE
NOT.



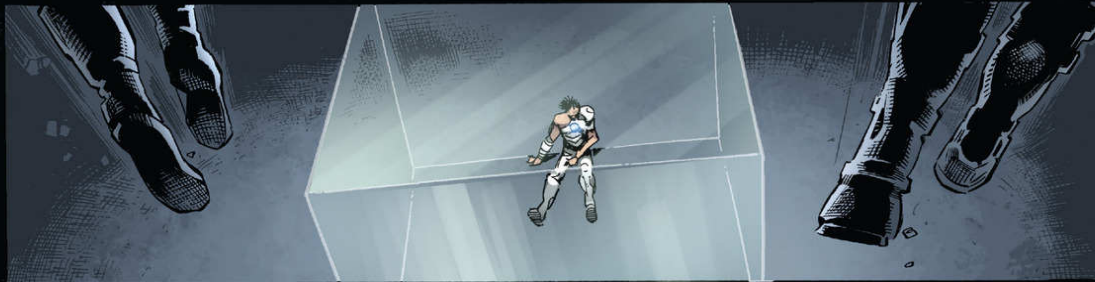
BUT I
WILL FIND WHAT
I AM SEARCHING
FOR, STARK...AND
WHEN THAT HAPPENS,
YOU'LL STILL BE
HERE...

ROTTING
AWAY.

REGRETTING
WHAT A FOOL YOU
ARE, AND WHAT
FOOLISH THINGS
YOU SAID.



GOODBYE...
I WILL
NOT BE
RETURNING.





JESSICA,
NATASHA.

AREN'T
THE TWO OF
YOU A SIGHT
FOR SORE
EYES.



ALTHOUGH...

I SUPPOSE IT
MIGHT ACTUALLY BE
CAUSE FOR **ALARM**. ARE YOU
HERE ON BEHALF OF MY FRIENDS
WHO WANT NOTHING
TO DO WITH ME?

OR ON
BEHALF OF MY
FRIENDS WHO
WANT TO
KILL ME?



OH,
ANTHONY...

IT'S
AMAZING
THAT YOU STILL
THINK YOU HAVE
FRIENDS AT
ALL.



AND
WE'RE HERE
ON OUR
OWN.

NO ONE
ELSE KNOWS
WHERE YOU
ARE.



IF THAT'S THE
CASE... THEN
HOW DID YOU
FIND ME?



STEVE. IT WAS LATE
ONE NIGHT. WE WERE
TALKING. NORMALLY...
WELL, LATELY, ALL
HE DOES IS PLAN.
ALL HE DOES IS
CHASE.

MOST PEOPLE
HAVEN'T REALIZED--
THEY DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO LOOK FOR.
THEY JUST SEE HOW
STRONG HE IS--
BUT... ALL
THIS...

IT'S
TAKEN ITS
TOLL.



WELL...
WE'VE ALL
SUFFERED,
HAVEN'T
WE?



HMMM. HE MUST HAVE BEEN FEELING ESPECIALLY BROODING THAT NIGHT BECAUSE HE TOLD ME A STORY I HADN'T HEARD BEFORE.



OH?



YES. ABOUT HOW--AFTER YOU HAD YOUR... DISAGREEMENT WITH YOUR ILLUMINATI BROTHERS MONTHS AGO--YOU HAD CONTACTED HIM.

THAT THE TWO OF YOU MET IN SECRET. FOR A MEETING OF THE MINDS--FOR ONE LAST CHANCE TO BURY THE HATCHET.



DID HE TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED THERE?

AND WHY I'VE GOT THE SAME HAUNTED LOOK ON MY FACE THAT HE HAS?



NO. HE SHUT DOWN.

BUT IT WAS ENOUGH FOR US TO FIGURE OUT *WHEN* THAT MEETING HAPPENED, AND THEREFORE *WHERE*...



WHICH WAS JUST ENOUGH BREADCRUMBS TO TRACK YOUR LEAVING AND SUBSEQUENT MOVEMENTS--AND TO EXTRAPOLATE, AS WELL AS ONE COULD, WHERE YOU PROBABLY ENDED UP.



THANK GOD FOR SPIES WITH AN ITCH THEY CAN'T SCRATCH.

AND MORE IMPORTANTLY--THAT YOU'RE HERE TO SAVE ME.



WE'VE LEFT STEVE BECAUSE WE'RE DONE WITH HIS CAUSE-- TOO RIGHTEOUS FOR THE TIMES...

BUT WE CAN'T SAVE YOU, TONY, UNLESS YOU KNOW THAT YOU NEED SAVING.



THIS IS A CAGE. I'M PERFECTLY AWARE I NEED SAVING.



I WANT TO LET YOU OUT OF THERE...

BUT I CAN'T RISK UNLEASHING YOU BACK ON THE WORLD IF YOU CAN'T SEE THAT--IN YOUR OWN WAY-- YOU'VE BEEN JUST AS WRONG AS HE HAS.

MAYBE EVEN WORSE.



WRONG?



WRONG?

YOU PEOPLE...



IN 6 MONTHS ... TIME RUNS OUT!



MARVEL

HICKMAN
CASELLI
MARTIN

038
AR

PREVIOUSLY IN AVENGERS



EIGHT MONTHS LATER



NEW AVENGERS



SUNSPOT



CANNONBALL



SMASHER



MANIFOLD



BLACK WIDOW



SPIDER-WOMAN



SHANG-CHI



VALIDATOR



POD



ZEBRA KIDS

MULTIVERSAL AVENGERS



HYPERION



ODINSON



STARBRAND



NIGHTMASK



ABYSS



EX NIHILO

S.H.I.E.L.D. AVENGERS



STEVE ROGERS



HAWKEYE



MARIA HILL



WAR MACHINE DRONES



INVISIBLE WOMAN



CAPTAIN AMERICA



CAPTAIN MARVEL

THE ILLUMINATI



BEAST



HULK/DOC GREEN



MISTER FANTASTIC



BLACK BOLT



BLACK PANTHER



CAPTAIN BRITAIN



AMADEUS CHO



IRON MAN



DOCTOR STRANGE

THE CABAL



NAMOR



THANOS



BLACK SWAN



TERRAX



MAXIMUS



PROXIMA MIDNIGHT



CORVUS GLAIVE



CYCLOPS



“ORIGIN SITES”

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ARTIST: **STEFANO CASELLI**

COLOR ARTIST: **FRANK MARTIN**

LETTERER: **VC's CORY PETIT**

COVER ART: **SIMONE BIANCHI**

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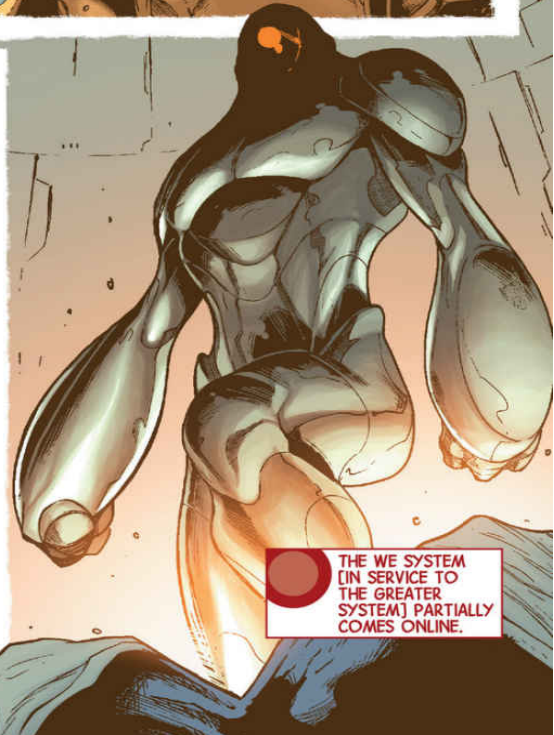
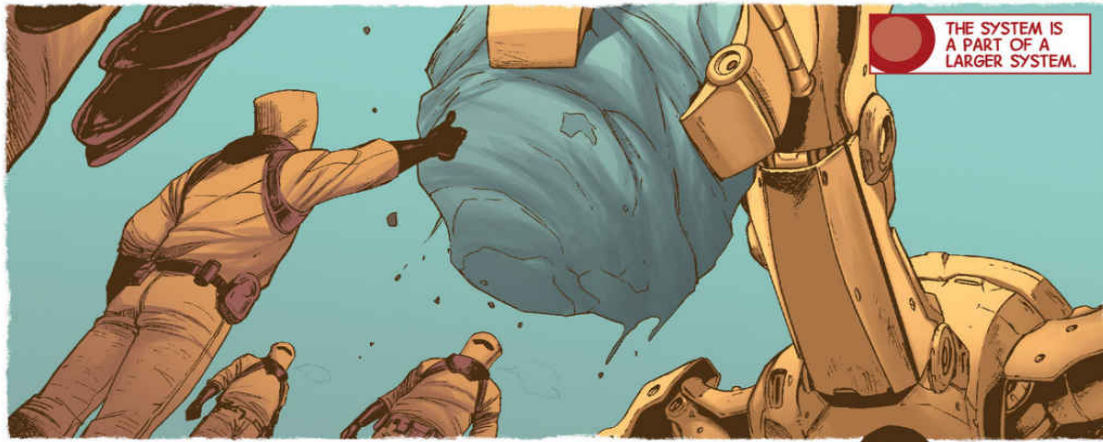
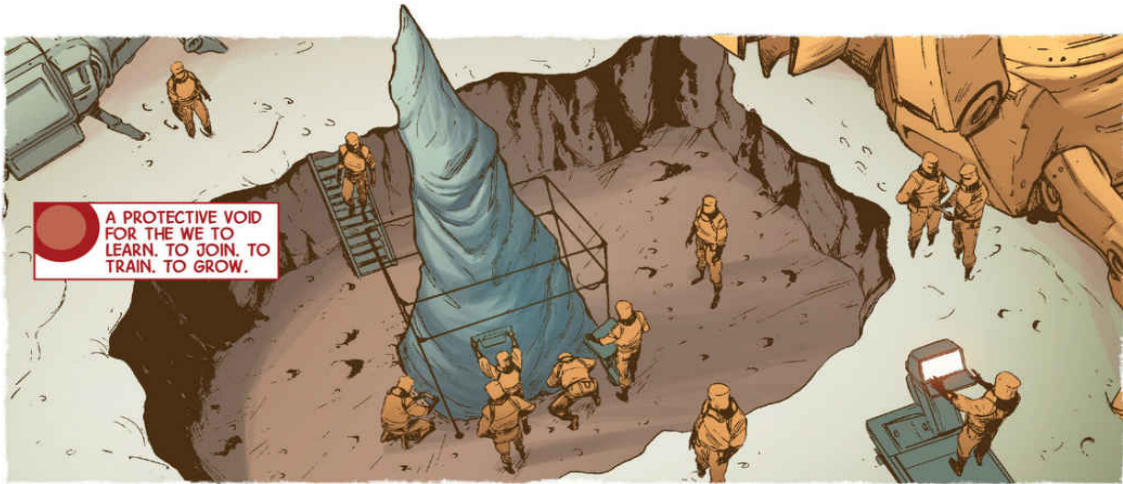
NOTE: PLEASE READ NEW AVENGERS #26, ON SALE NOW, BEFORE THIS ISSUE!

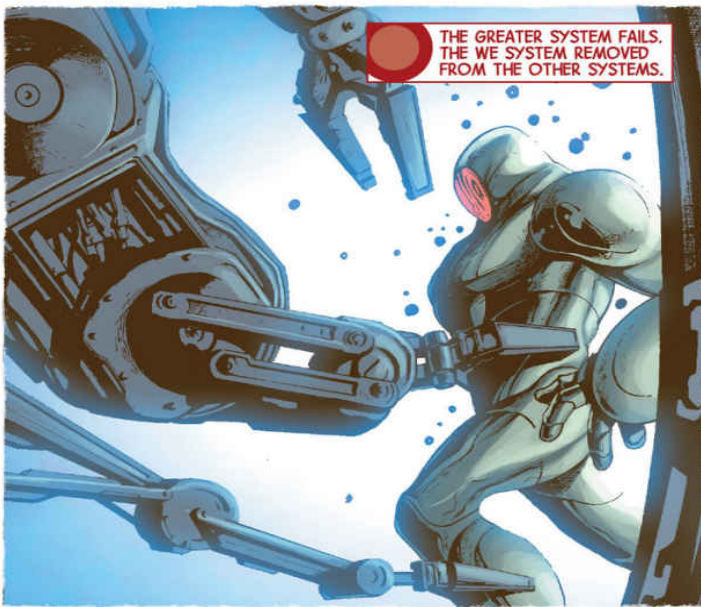
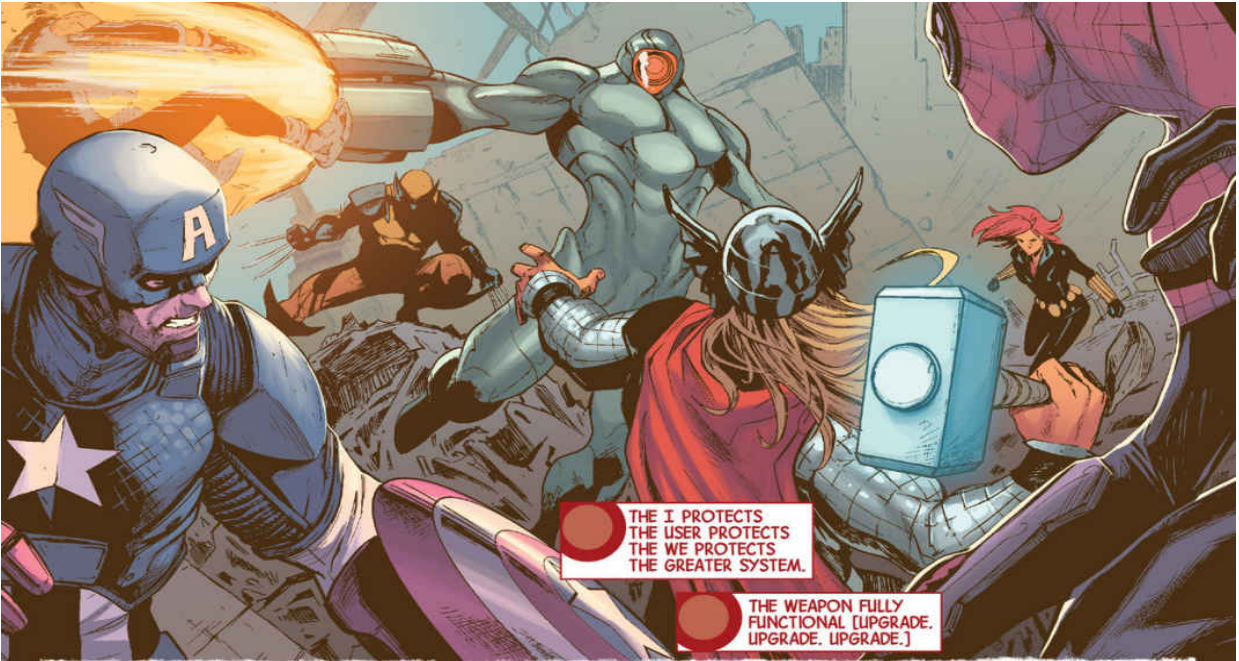
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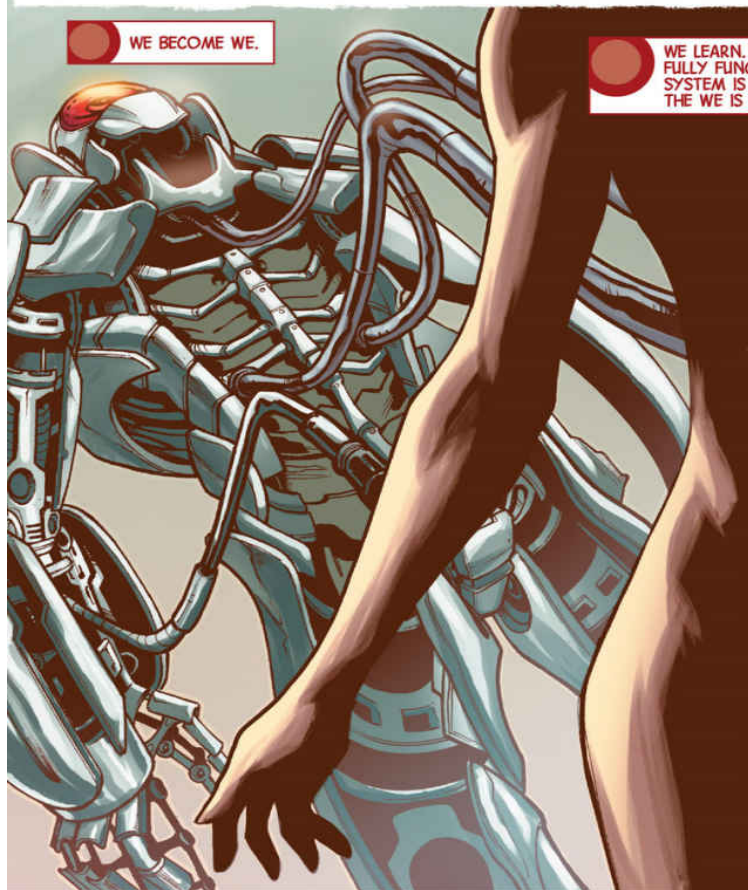
ADRIFT.

LOST.





WE.



WE BECOME WE.

WE LEARN. THE WEAPON IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL. THE SYSTEM IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL. THE WE IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL.



WE WAIT...



AND THEN WE HEAR A VOICE. IT SAYS...

WELCOME BACK.







MAYBE IF YOU WANT TO ARGUE **EFFECTIVENESS**, BUT IF YOU WANT TO ARGUE **INTENT**? I DUNNO...I GREW UP IDOLIZING SOME OF THESE GUYS. IT MIGHT BE A SHORTCOMING, BUT I STILL GIVE THEM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT.

WHAT I **DO** KNOW IS THAT THE ILLUMINATI HAD A PLAN TO GET AT THE HEART OF ALL THIS, INCLUDING SENDING SOMEONE OUT THERE--INTO THE MULTIVERSE--TO FIND OUT WHO CAUSED THIS.

WHICH IS WHY, WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE INDIGENOUS ENGINEERS HERE IN THE SAVAGE LAND--

THANK YOU.

YOU'RE WELCOME.

--A.I.M. SCIENTISTS REDESIGNED AND BUILT AN AUGER STRONG ENOUGH TO PROJECT AN ASSAULT TEAM ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE TO ALSO TRY TO FIND OUT WHOEVER IS BEHIND THE COLLAPSE...

AND MAYBE EVEN STOP IT BY, YOU KNOW...PUNCHING THE PROBLEM TO DEATH.

LIKE AVENGERS.

WAIT, HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

I DUNNO. MAYBE IT'S A GENERAL MOOD I'M SENSING? I MEAN, THOR DOESN'T HAVE HIS HAMMER ANYMORE, BUT MY GOD, IZZY...THE LOOK IN THE GUY'S EYES IS ENOUGH FOR ME TO--

NO. THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT THE ILLUMINATI SENT SOMEONE?

OH, THAT.

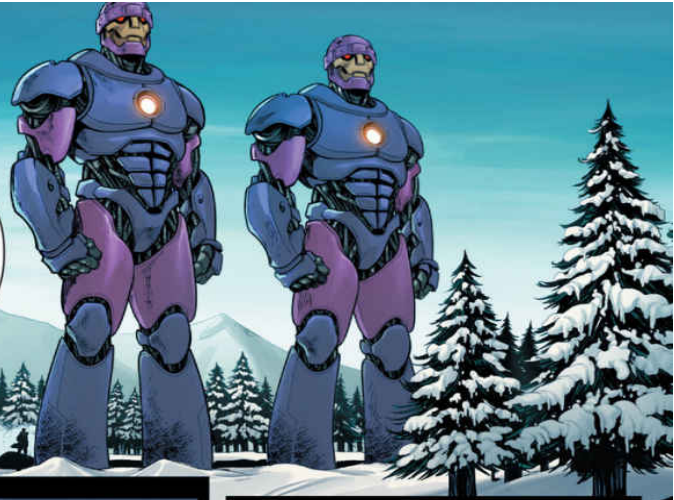
WELL...WE'VE HAD SOMEONE INSIDE THEIR OPERATION FOR THE LAST MONTH.

NATION X.
TWO DAYS AGO.

HE ASKED FOR MY HELP, SO I WAS, IN SPITE OF OLD WOUNDS. HAPPY TO GIVE IT...

BUT THERE ARE RULES, ROBERTO. I... HAVE RULES.

THIS PLACE IS A HAVEN FOR ANYONE WHO CALLS THEMSELVES MUTANT, AND WE STAND IN OPPOSITION TO ANYONE WHO WOULD MEAN OUR KIND HARM...



BUT I WILL NOT ACCEPT BEING SWEEPED UP IN WHATEVER IT IS HE IS PLANNING HERE TODAY.

WE HAVE OUR OWN...IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO STOP WHAT'S HAPPENING, AND HAVE NO TIME FOR DISTRACTIONS. UNDERSTAND?

UH-HUH. DON'T CRAP ON THE LAWN. GOT IT.

MAN...LOOK AT THIS STUFF. THESE THINGS USED TO CREEP ME OUT.



YES. AND NOW THEY MAKE A GOOD WARNING:

ABANDON HATE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE.



WELL, IT'S CERTAINLY A MESSAGE. I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.

SO WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

HMM?

"WE HAVE OUR OWN...IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO STOP WHAT'S HAPPENING"...

BECAUSE, CYCLOPS, IF YOU'VE TRULY GOT SOMETHING-- I THINK WE'RE ROUNDING INTO THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO GENERATE SOME OF THAT LIFELONG GLOBAL GOOD WILL YOU'VE CRAVED YOUR ENTIRE LIFE.



IF I'M BEING HONEST...ALL IT MAKES ME THINK ABOUT IS STARTING A FIRE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SCOTT?



THIS ISN'T THE FUTURE WE DESERVED, IS IT?

BUT THEN AGAIN, IT NEVER IS. THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T LET THE WORLD SHAPE YOU--YOU SHAPE /IT/. JUST LIKE PROFESSOR X TAUGHT US.

YOU DO IT AS BEST YOU CAN.





AND THEN, AFTER HE FILLED ME IN ON ALL THE VARIOUS MACHINATIONS WE WERE IGNORANT OF... HE BASICALLY TOLD ME EVERYTHING THE ILLUMINATI WERE UP TO.

INCLUDING THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE A PLAN FOR BOTH SETTLING UP WITH THE S.H.I.E.L.D. TEAM AND ELIMINATING THE CABAL FROM THE EQUATION.



AND HE TOLD ME THEY WERE GOING TO DO IT SOON.



CAN I JUST SAY...

I HONESTLY HAVE NO IDEA WHO I'M SUPPOSED TO BE SUPPORTING HERE.

SO, I'M LOST, MAN.

WE ALL LEFT THE AVENGERS BECAUSE WE REFUSED TO HINT "OTHER AVENGERS"--BUT THEN WE ALSO COMPLETELY WASHED OUR HANDS OF THE ILLUMINATI BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY WERE DOING...



THAT'S THE POINT, EDEN.

SO ARE THEY ALL OF THEM.



THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO STOP THEM FROM FIGHTING EACH OTHER AND FIND SOME WAY TO REMIND THEM OF WHO THEY ARE...

AND WHAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.

THAT'S OUR MISSION. OUR GOAL.



THE SAVAGE LAND.
THREE DAYS AGO.

SO NO ONE KNOWS YOU'RE HERE?

WE SLIPPED ALL OUR SURVEILLANCE BEFORE WE CROSSED INTO MEXICO.

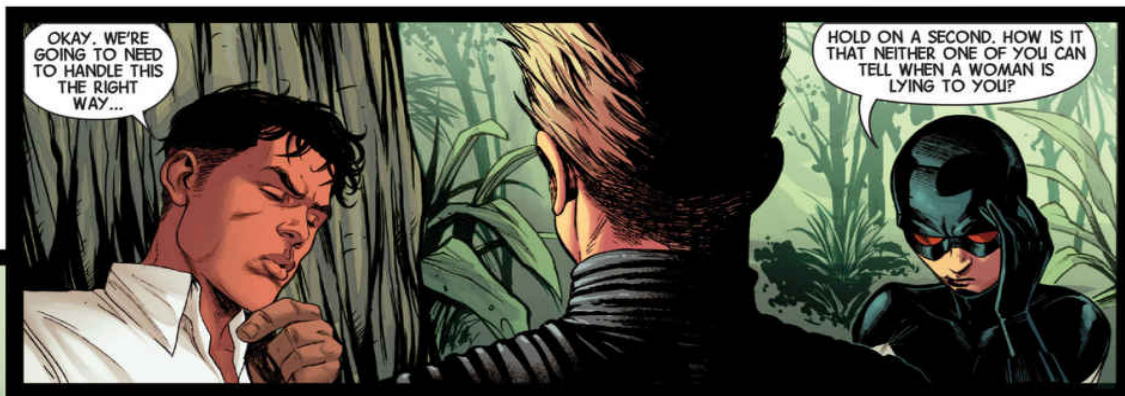
IT TOOK A LITTLE TIME...BUT GETTING HERE INCOGNITO WASN'T THAT DIFFICULT, ROBERTO.

WE'RE PRETTY GOOD AT THIS.

AND THEN YOU CAME STRAIGHT HERE?



YES.





STEVE ROGERS HAS ASSUMED THAT HIS...ENEMY IS SMARTER THAN HIM. SO HIS ONLY RECOURSE WAS REDUNDANCY AND OVERWHELMING FORCE...

TO THAT END, HE HAS QUIETLY ASSEMBLED SECONDARY AND TERTIARY TEAMS THAT ALMOST NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT.

THE ILLUMINATI THINK THEIR ADVERSARY IS ONE THING, WHEN IN FACT IT IS SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER.

AND WITH THAT...YOU KNOW EVERYTHING.
IT'S ALL LAID OUT ON THE TABLE.

WE HAVE TO OVERCOME THESE THINGS, AND AT THE SAME TIME CONVINCE OUR FRIENDS--WHO HAVE LOST THEIR WAY--TO REDISCOVER COMMON GROUND FOR THE COMMON GOOD.
SO NO BIG DEAL, RIGHT?

JUST WIN AGAINST A GROUP OF SUPER-INTELLECTS WHO SEE THINGS FIVE MOVES AHEAD AT THE SAME TIME WE'RE FACING SOME KIND OF AVENGERS ARMY COBBLED TOGETHER BY AMERICA'S SUPER-ANGRY GREATEST WARTIME HERO...
SURE. AND THEN WE'LL ALL HAVE PIE.

YOU DO ACTUALLY HAVE SOMETHING UP YOUR SLEEVE, RIGHT?
BECAUSE ALL THIS BLUSTER LEADING TO NOTHING...
NOT A GOOD LOOK.

ACTUALLY, I DO HAVE THE SMARTEST EX-EVIL SCIENTISTS CURRENTLY BUILDING SOME VERY IMPRESSIVE MACHINES, BUT US--WE'RE HERE IN THIS ROOM--ARE ENOUGH.

DO YOU REMEMBER HOW ALL THIS STARTED? EX NIHILO AND HIS ORIGIN BOMBS? HE WANTED TO REMAKE THE EARTH, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE REALLY DID?

HE KICKSTARTED OUR AVENGERS WORLD.



I WAS AIKKU JOKINEN.

NO, I *AM* AIKKU JOKINEN.



MY PARENTS ARE FINNISH, BUT I WAS BORN IN NORWAY, THEIR ONLY CHILD.



I DON'T LIKE THE COLD, BUT LOVE THE OUTDOORS. I LOVE CHOCOLATE AND MY GIRLFRIEND, DARJA. I LOVE ALL THE THINGS I ALWAYS HAVE...



I AM STILL AIKKU, BUT ALSO...WE.



WHEN I FIRST WOKE, I DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

[CONFUSED. AFRAID. PANIC.]

THEN I HEARD
THE WEAPON.
IT SPOKE TO ME.

IT SPOKE...
INSIDE ME.

WE.

I LEARNED WHAT
I NOW WAS.
WE LEARNED.

WE.

WE ARE A
WEAPON.





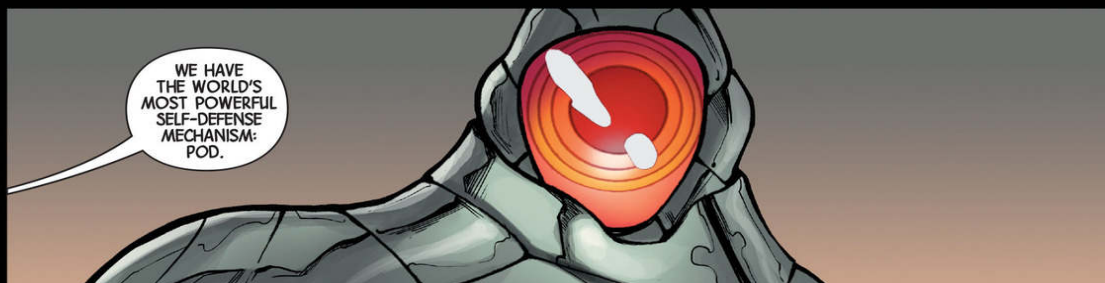
SEVEN
SITES.

STARBRAND
ACCIDENTLY DESTROYED
THE EARTHMIND--THE SELF-
AWARENESS SITE. AND WE
WERE FORCED TO ELIMINATE
BOTH THE SELF-REPAIR
AND COMMUNICATION
NODES.

BUT FOUR
REMAINED ACTIVE.
HEALTHY AND VIBRANT...
AN AVENGERS
WORLD.



AND
WE HAVE ALL
THE POWER WE NEED.
SELF-SUSTENANCE
CONTROLLED BY
THE ZEBRAS.



WE HAVE
THE WORLD'S
MOST POWERFUL
SELF-DEFENSE
MECHANISM:
POD.



WE CONTROL
THE POWER OF
EVOLUTION:
VALIDATOR.



AND WE HAVE
AN ARMY THANKS
TO THE FINAL
SITE...

"WHEN SHANG-CHI OFFERED TO EXPLORE THE KOBE SITE MONTHS AGO, IT WAS BEFORE WE HAD RECOVERED POD AND REALLY BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS AT WORK."

IT TOOK HIM MONTHS, BUT SHANG FINALLY FIGURED OUT HOW TO... COMMUNE WITH THE MALLEABLE GENESIS MATTER THAT WAS BOTH THE BY-PRODUCT AND THE COLLECTIVE SENTIENT REMAINS OF THE PEOPLE WHO ONCE LIVED THERE.

"THEY WERE BASICALLY WAITING TO BE REMADE. REBORN. WHATEVER."

BOTH THE HAND AND TWO S.H.I.E.L.D. TEAMS HAVE DISAPPEARED IN THE KOBE ZONE--SHANG BELIEVES THEY TRIED TO RESIST THE GENESIS MATTER.

IT ABSORBED THEM AS WELL, SO SHANG WENT THE OTHER WAY AND SUBMITTED..."

"AND BY DOING THAT, GAINED CONTROL OF THE SITE AND THE POWER IT WIELDED."

"IT WAS THE POWER OF REPLICATION..."

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"IT WAS THE POWER OF REPLICATION..."

"IT ABSORBED THEM AS WELL, SO SHANG WENT THE OTHER WAY AND SUBMITTED..."



"AND NOW A
MAN HAS BECOME
AN ARMY."

TO BE CONTINUED...

IN 5 MONTHS ... TIME RUNS OUT!

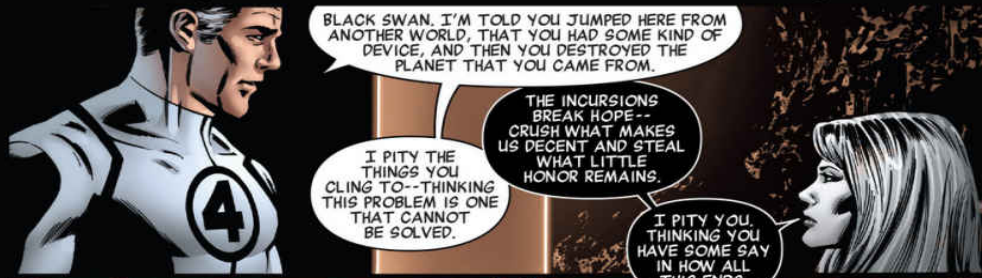


MARVEL

HICKMAN
KUDRANSKI
ALMARA

027

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS





SO YOU ARE SELLING YOUR SOUL, STEPHEN?

IF I AM TO BE DAMNED, LET IT BE USING ALL THE RESOURCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF A SORCERER SUPREME.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR SOUL DO YOU SELL THIS DAY?

ALL OF IT.

EIGHT MONTHS LATER



THE MAD THINKER HAS FOUND A WAY TO FIND OUT WHO IS BEHIND THIS. NOW I HAVE A PLAN, AND ALL THE PIECES TO BRING IT TO PASS...

...THANKS TO THE MOLECULE MAN!

LET THERE BE SUFFERING AND WOE TO ALL WHO STAND IN MY WAY.



MANY THINGS EXIST IN THE SPACE BETWEEN UNIVERSES, IN COMPARISON TO HOW FEW SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXIST IN NO-SPACE. AS WE APPROACH THE END OF EVERYTHING, OVERFLOW AND OVERLAP ARE GOING TO LEAD TO A LESS...ORDERLY STATE OF DECAY.

AND SO WE HAVE OUR COMPRESSION PROBLEM.



IT FEELS WRONG. THE AUGER WILL THROW ALL OF YOU TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MULTIVERSE TO FIND WHAT CAUSED THIS WHILE I STAY HERE AND TRY TO FIX THE AVENGERS--A GROUP OF WHICH YOU WERE A FOUNDING MEMBER...

I WISH YOU WELL, ROBERTO. SOON...WE SHALL SEE.

THOR, YOU UNDERSTAND, RIGHT?



"THERE'S NO COMING BACK."

MULTIVERSAL AVENGERS



HYPERION



ODINSON



STARBRAND



NIGHTMASK



ABYSS



EX NIHILO

NEW AVENGERS



SUNSPOT



CANNONBALL



SMASHER



MANIFOLD



BLACK WIDOW



SPIDER-WOMAN



SHANG-CHI



VALIDATOR



POD



ZEBRA KIDS

S.H.I.E.L.D. AVENGERS



STEVE ROGERS



HAWKEYE



MARIA HILL



WAR MACHINE DRONES



INVISIBLE WOMAN



CAPTAIN AMERICA



CAPTAIN MARVEL

THE ILLUMINATI



BEAST



HULK/DOC GREEN



MISTER FANTASTIC



BLACK BOLT



BLACK PANTHER



CAPTAIN BRITAIN



AMADEUS CHO



IRON MAN



DOCTOR STRANGE

THE CABAL



NAMOR



THANOS



BLACK SWAN



TERRAX



MAXIMUS



PROXIMA MIDNIGHT



CORVUS GLAIVE



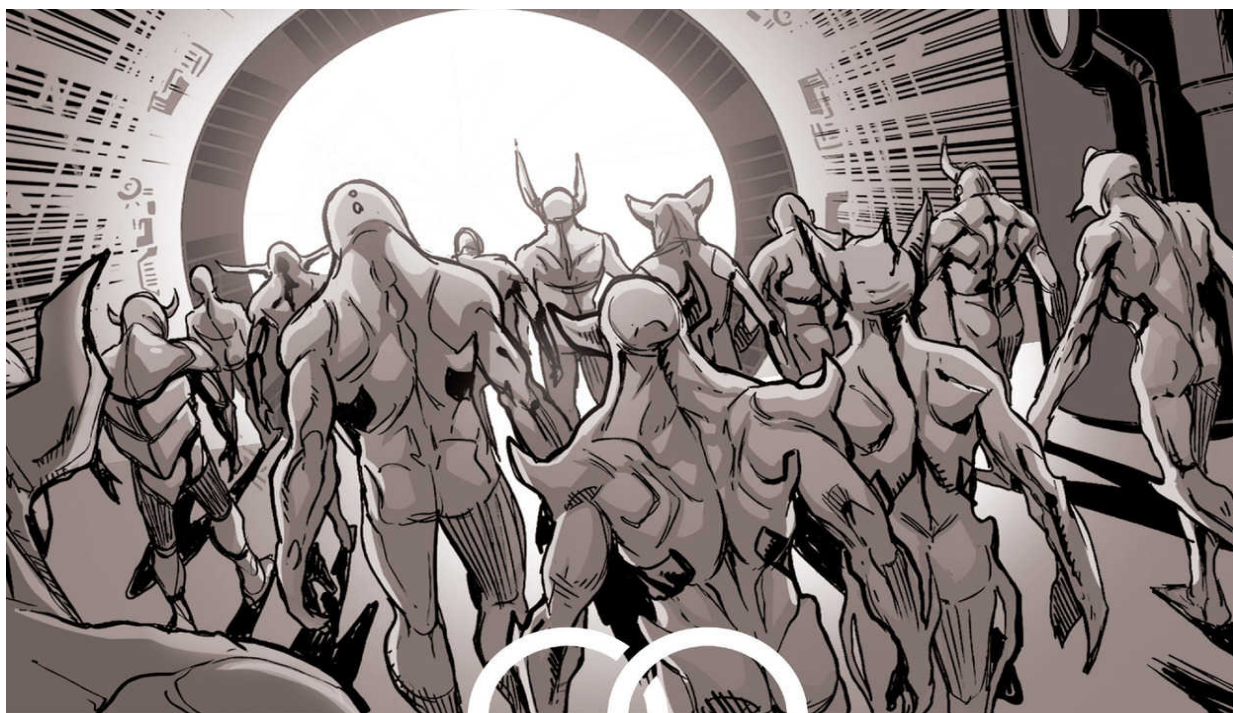
DOCTOR DOOM



THE MAD THINKER



MOLECULE MAN



“TRIAGE”

WRITER: **JONATHAN HICKMAN**

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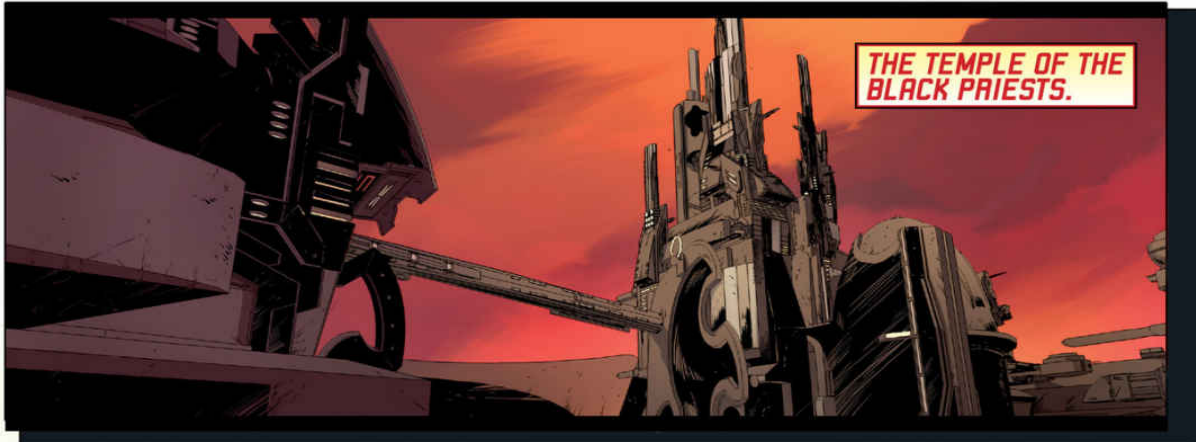
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AVENGERS CREATED BY **STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY**

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THE NOTHING SPACE OF
DESTROYED UNIVERSES.



THE TEMPLE OF THE
BLACK PRIESTS.



SOMETHIIIIING
SHIIIIIMMERS...

SOMETHIIIIING
SPARKS...

COMPANY'S
HERE.



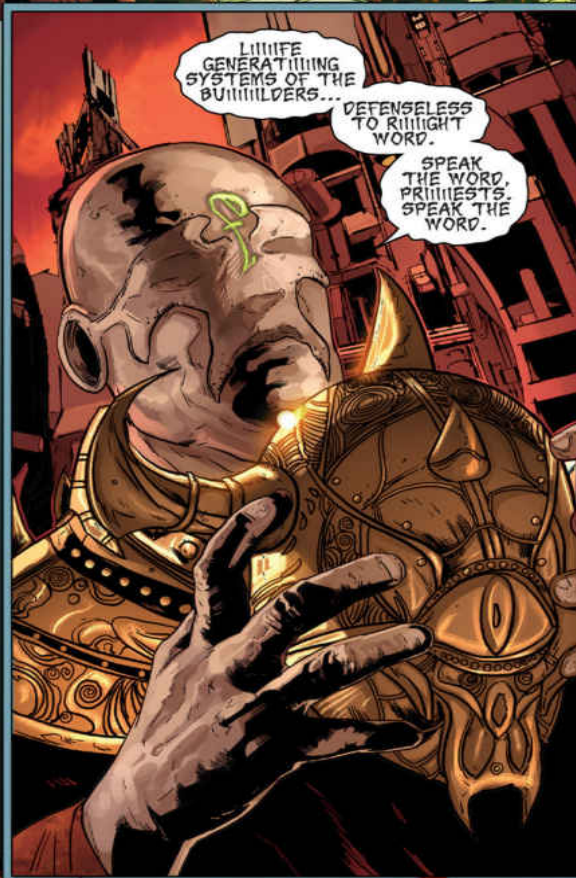
FFUWASHHHHHH!

FOUND IT!
SEE...I TOLD YOU IT WAS OUT HERE, BUT WHICH ONES ARE THES--

BLACK PRIESTS!
THEY KILL WITH A WORD...

"QUICKLY! BEFORE THEY CAN SPEAK THEM!"

LIFE, EXISTING IN A PLACE WHERE IT SHOULDN'T...





THE OTHER SIDE IS COLLAPSING, ABYSS--YOU CAN RELEASE THE GATE.

WE WON'T BE LEAVING THE WAY WE CAME.

WHERE ARE WE?



NOT SURE, HYPERION, BUT WHEREVER IT IS, WE'VE FOUND THE BLACK PRIESTS. WE SHOULD HAVE HAD SURPRISE ON OUR SIDE--BUT THE PRIESTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN RESPONDING.

WE ARE LOSING NIHILII.



GODS.

I'M COUNTING THOUSANDS. MAYBE MORE...

"SINCE THE AUGER, WE'VE BEEN DROWNING IN SIDERA MARIS--OUR ONLY ENCOUNTER WITH THE PRIESTS WAS THE ONE WE DEFEATED SEVERAL JUMPS AGO..."



"BUT THIS MUST BE THEIR SEAT OF POWER--WE'RE VASTLY OUTNUMBERED WITH NOWHERE TO GO!"

WHEN, IN THESE LAST DAYS, HAVE WE NOT FACED THE UNSPEAKABLE.

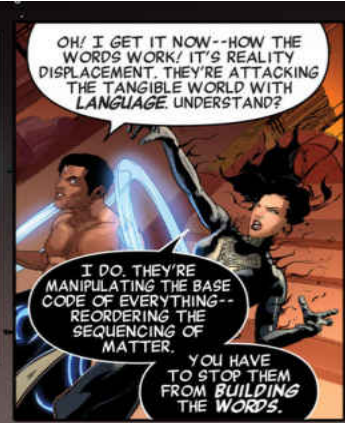








ARGGGH!



OH! I GET IT NOW--HOW THE WORDS WORK! IT'S REALITY DISPLACEMENT. THEY'RE ATTACKING THE TANGIBLE WORLD WITH LANGUAGE. UNDERSTAND?

I DO. THEY'RE MANIPULATING THE BASE CODE OF EVERYTHING--REORDERING THE SEQUENCING OF MATTER.

YOU HAVE TO STOP THEM FROM BUILDING THE WORDS.

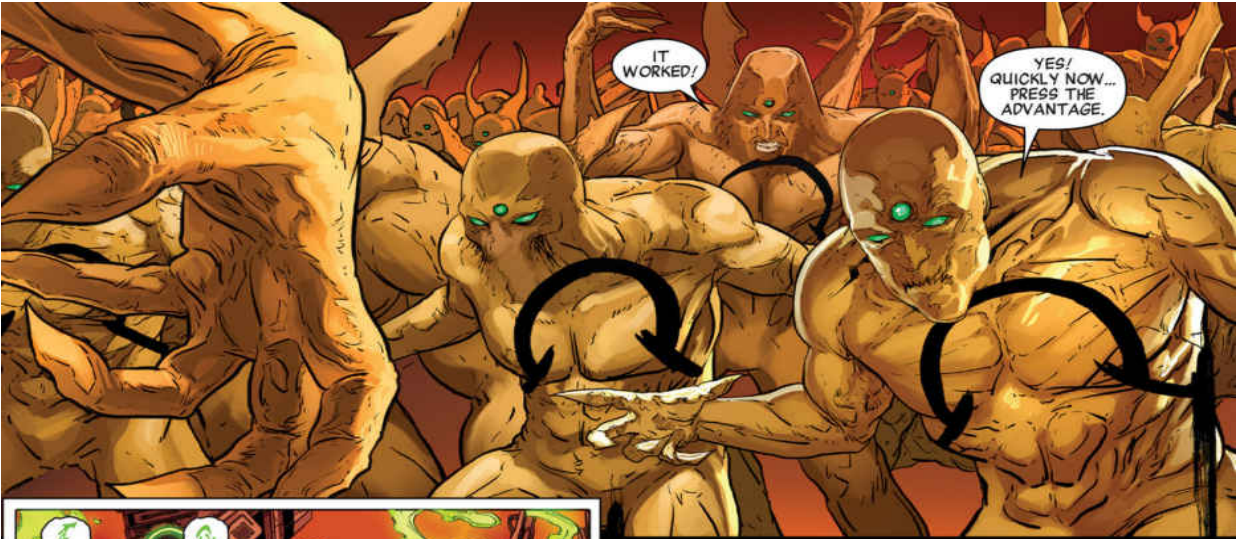


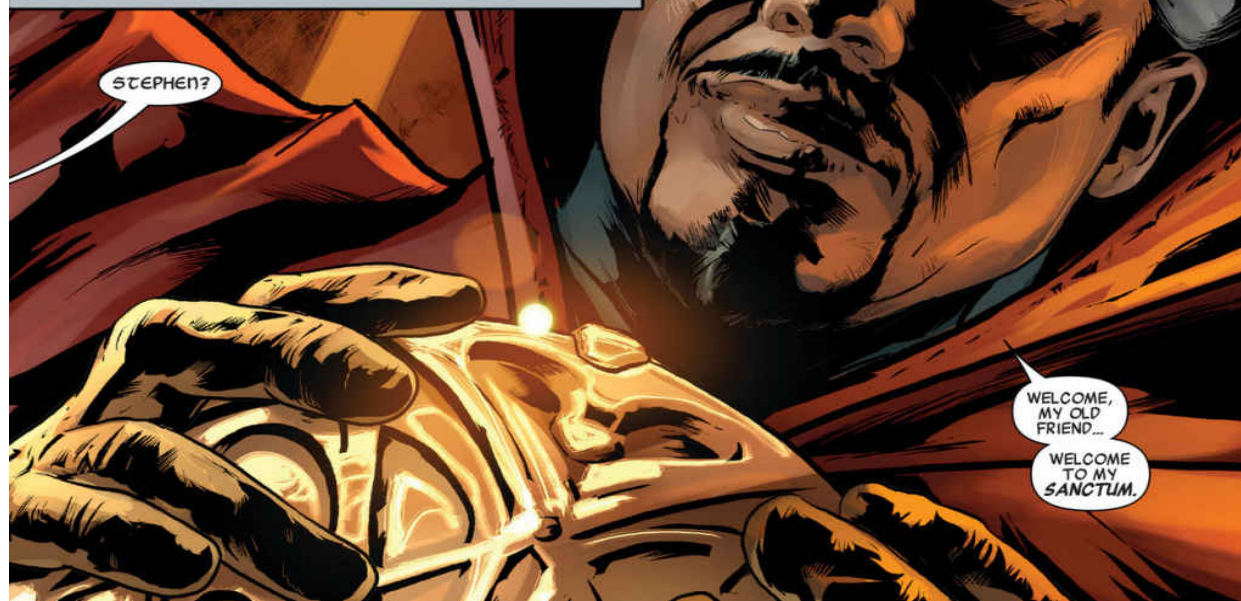
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEFEAT ALL OF THEM--JUST STOP THEM FROM COMING TOGETHER!



KRAK-A-THOOM!







LATVERIA.



THE
RABBLE LOVE
STORIES.

THEY LOVE
THE LIE, WHICH IS WHY
THERE IS NO DISCERNIBLE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
WHAT THEY CALL **TRUTH**
AND WHAT THEY CALL
FICTION.

HISTORY, A
COLLECTION OF HALF-
TRUTHS WEAVED TOGETHER
SO AS TO ESTABLISH A
SUPPOSED FIRM FOUNDATION
SUPPORTING ALL THAT
HAS BEEN BUILT--
MODERNITY.

WE
CAN AGREE
ON THIS, CAN'T
WE, MISTER
REECE?



LOTS
OF CRACKS
UNDERFOOT.

BEDROCK
MADE OF
AIR.

THEY THINK
THEY UNDERSTAND
WHO I AM--**WHAT**
I AM--**BUT** THEY'RE
WRONG. **YOU'RE**
WRONG.

WHAT'S AN
ORIGIN, BUT
A STORY?

WHAT'S
MY STORY,
BUT A
LIE?

WE
ALL LOVE
OUR STORIES,
DON'T WE?







MAP.
MAPS.
MAKING
MAPS...

WE HAVE
A PAN-UNIVERSAL
PROBLEM, MISTER
REECE, BUT I BELIEVE
IT ORIGINATES HERE
ON EARTH.

EARTH?
OH, IT'S
HERE...

I BELIEVE
YOU.

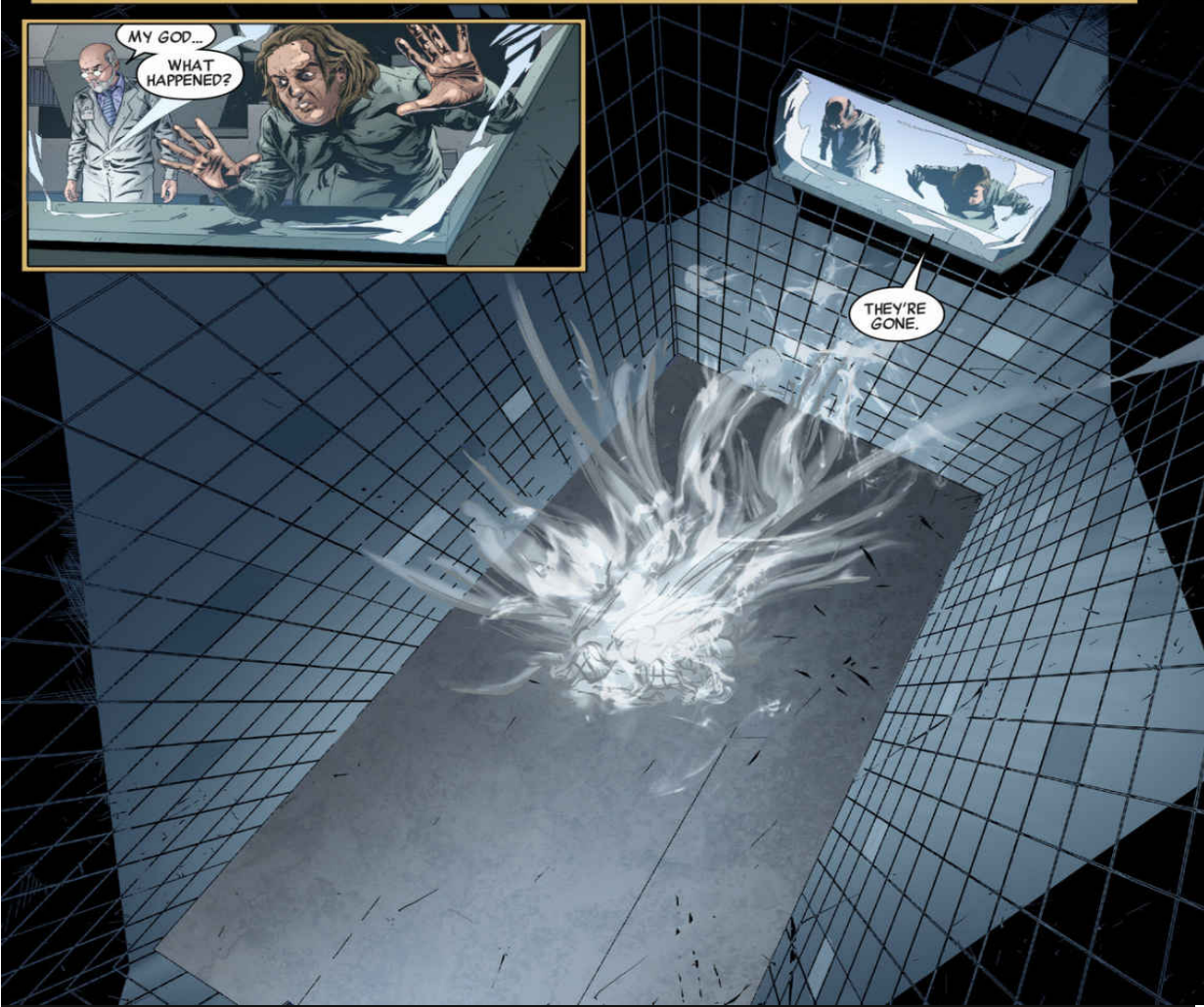
I WANT
YOU TO TELL ME
A STORY, MISTER
REECE--AND I
WANT IT TO BE
TRUE.

BUT
IT'S NOT
HERE.

WHY DOES
THE FREQUENCY
OF THE ROCK'S
SIGNAL MATCH
YOUR OWN?

WHY IS ALL
THIS HAPPENING?
AND WHAT IS YOUR
PART IN IT?

WHY?
WHY? WHY?
WHY?
SHOW,
DON'T TELL--
ACTIONS, NOT
WORDS.
HEY,
DOOM...





I'M SURE YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, ODINSON, AS DO I...THE LEAST OF WHICH BEING WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ARM...

BUT DESPITE OUR QUICK RESOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT OUT THERE, THE PRIESTHOOD IS COLLECTIVELY CONCERNED ABOUT ONE EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT THING...

YES...

HOW DID YOU FIND US OUT HERE IN THE NOTHING?

FLOATING, CIRCLING THE LOST SPACES?

WE DID. WELL...HE DID. TELL THEM, NIGHTMASK.

I WAS MADE TO NAVIGATE THE SUPERFLOW--THE SPACE BETWEEN UNIVERSES.

I MINE THE IDEAS THAT USED TO EXIST THERE. WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF ENTIRE UNIVERSES, THE WEB-LIKE FLOWSPACE CAME UNDONE...LIKE COLLAPSING LATTICEWORK WITHOUT A FRAME.

BUT MY ABILITY TO FIND THINGS IN THE SPACES IN BETWEEN--THE ABILITY TO MINE BROADCASTED IDEAS--STILL FUNCTIONS. WE KNEW THAT SOME OF THE BEINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERYTHING EXISTED HERE.

SO FINDING YOU WAS EASY ONCE I STARTED LOOKING.

HE HEARD US? WAS HE LISTENING CLOSELY? DID HE HEAR OTHER THINGS?

DID YOU HEAR THE OTHER VOICES?



WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?



THEY... AH, WE--YOU SEE, THE **BLACK PRIESTS** ARE CAUGHT UP IN A CONFLICT THEY WERE NEVER INTENDED TO BE PART OF.

THERE IS A WAR UNDERWAY BETWEEN TWO SEPARATE FORCES: THE **IVORY KINGS** AND **RABUM ALAL**.

FROM WHAT I HAVE WITNESSED FIRSTHAND, THEY BOTH WANT THE SAME THING--AND IT'S THE SAME REASON **YOU** ARE HERE--THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERYTHING.



THE SEARCH FOR DEATH WITHOUT THE PROMISE OF NEW LIFE OR REBIRTH IS A GREAT SIN IN THE EYES OF THE UNIVERSE.

I KNOW.

THEN WHY DO YOU SEEK IT AS WELL?



STEPHEN, I KNOW NOT HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN GONE FROM EARTH-- BUT YOU DISAPPEARED SOME TIME AGO...

THE ACTIONS OF THE **ILLUMINATI** ARE NOW KNOWN.



WE HAVE SEEN THE RECORDS... THESE PRIESTS-- **YOU**, IF YOU ARE TRULY AMONG THEM-- HAVE DESTROYED WORLDS.

OR AM I WRONG?

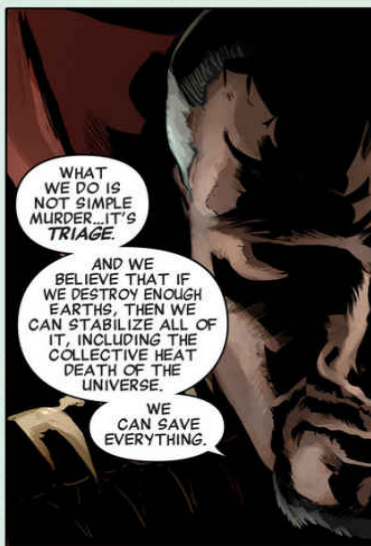


YOU ARE NOT.



BUT YOU MISUNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE DOING. THE **BLACK PRIESTS** ARE THE FIELD SURGEONS OF THE MULTIVERSE.

WE SEEK OUT EARTHS, AS THEY ARE THE TOUCHPOINT OF THE COLLAPSE, AND ELIMINATE THEM... THEREBY SAVING AN ENTIRE UNIVERSE.



WHAT WE DO IS NOT SIMPLE MURDER... IT'S **TRIAGE**.

AND WE BELIEVE THAT IF WE DESTROY ENOUGH EARTHS, THEN WE CAN STABILIZE ALL OF IT, INCLUDING THE COLLECTIVE HEAT DEATH OF THE UNIVERSE.

WE CAN SAVE EVERYTHING.



UNDERSTAND? EVERYTHING.

THAT IS WHAT THIS POWER IS-- THE WORDS ARE LIFE SURROUNDED BY NOTHING BUT DEATH.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WORD WE USE TO DESTROY A WORLD EACH AND EVERY TIME WE DO IT? "LIFE."



SO EACH PRIEST HAS A LETTER AND TOGETHER THEY MAKE A WORD... WHICH IS, WHAT, LIKE CASTING A SPELL?

OF A SORT. IT'S MORE LIKE A SYMBOL WHICH MEANS "SOMETHING," BUT THE MEANING CHANGES WITH EACH SYMBOL YOU ADD TO IT.

IN CODE-BREAKING TERMS, IT'S ACTUALLY AKIN TO A REPLACEMENT CIPHER.



BUT BACK THERE YOU DIDN'T NEED THE OTHERS TO MAKE *YOUR* WORDS.

NO.



HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE THEN?



I AM THE **SORCERER SUPREME**, YOUNG MAN...

I DO NOT SPEAK LETTERS-- I SPEAK WORDS.

AND I KNOW **ALL** OF THEM.



SO, THEN... THIS IS **NOT** THE PLACE WE ARE LOOKING FOR...

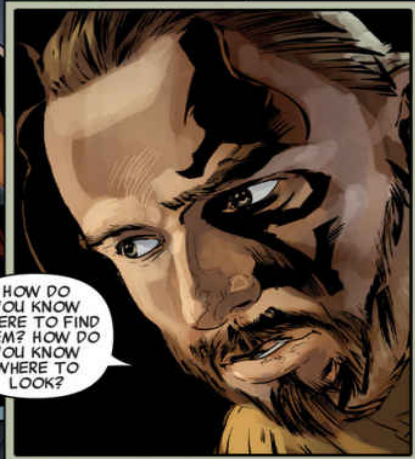
APPARENTLY NOT... BUT STEPHEN, CAN YOU HELP US FIND WHOEVER IT IS THAT WE NEED TO STOP IN ORDER TO END THIS MADNESS? TIME RUNS SHORT.





ACTUALLY, YOUR TIMING COULD NOT BE BETTER, AS I HAVE CONVINCED MY FELLOW PRIESTS THAT WE ALSO NEED TO STRIKE OUT AGAINST OUR ENEMIES.

AND I HAVE AT MY DISPOSAL A FORMIDABLE NUMBER OF SURGEONS.



HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND THEM? HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK?



TO FIND THE KILLINGS YOU'LL NEED A MAP-- FIND A MAPMAKER AND YOU'LL FIND THE KILLINGS.

TO FIND RABUM ALAL WATCH THE SWANS FLY SOUTH FOR THE WINTER. THEN SHOOT THEM FROM THE AIR AND HAVE THEM FOR DINNER.

SMACK. SMACK. SMACK.



YOU KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING?

DOUBLE OUR CHANCES. YOU GUYS HIT ONE, WE HIT THE OTHER.



THAT'S NOT ACTUALLY DOUBLING YOUR CHANCES, KEVIN. IF YOU WERE GOING TO DOUBLE YOUR CHANCES, THAT WOULD MEAN YOU NEED TO--

SHUT UP, ADAM.



ACCORDING TO WHAT YOU'VE TOLD US, WE HAVE TO STOP BOTH IF WE'RE GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL, RIGHT?

YES.



IN 5 MONTHS ... TIME RUNS OUT!

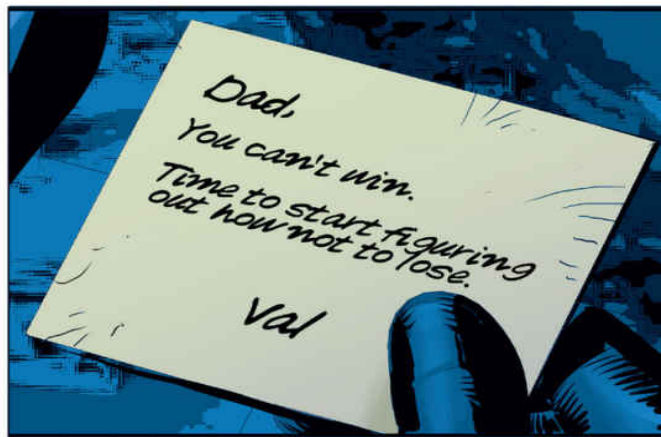
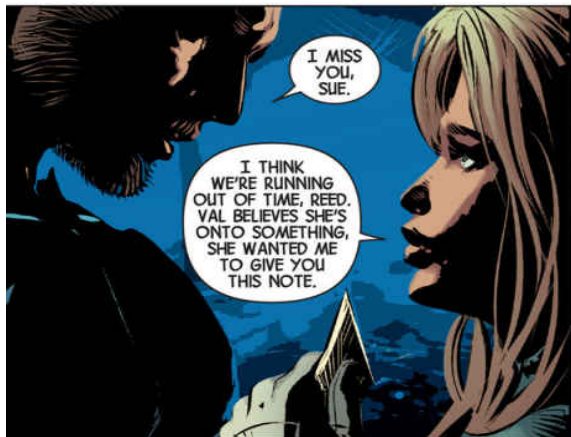


MARVEL

**HICKMAN
DEODATO
MARTIN**

**039
AR**

PREVIOUSLY IN AVENGERS



THE ILLUMINATI



BEAST



HULK/
DOC GREEN



MISTER
FANTASTIC



BLACK
BOLT



BLACK
PANTHER



CAPTAIN
BRITAIN



AMADEUS
CHO



IRON MAN



DOCTOR
STRANGE

S.H.I.E.L.D. AVENGERS



STEVE
ROGERS



HAWKEYE



MARIA
HILL



WAR MACHINE



INVISIBLE
WOMAN



CAPTAIN
AMERICA



CAPTAIN
MARVEL

NEW AVENGERS



SUNSPOT



CANNONBALL



SMASHER



MANIFOLD



BLACK WIDOW



SPIDER-
WOMAN



SHANG-CHI



VALIDATOR



POD



ZEBRA KIDS

MULTIVERSAL AVENGERS



HYPERION



ODINSON



STARBRAND



NIGHTMASK



ABYSS



EX NIHILO

THE CABAL



NAMOR



THANOS



BLACK SWAN



TERRAX



MAXIMUS



PROXIMA
MIDNIGHT



CORVUS
GLAIVE



“YOU CAN’T WIN: PART I”

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ARTIST: **MIKE DEODATO**

COLOR ARTIST: **FRANK MARTIN**

LETTERER: **VC's CORY PETIT**

COVER ART: **ALAN DAVIS, MARK FARMER, BRAD ANDERSON**

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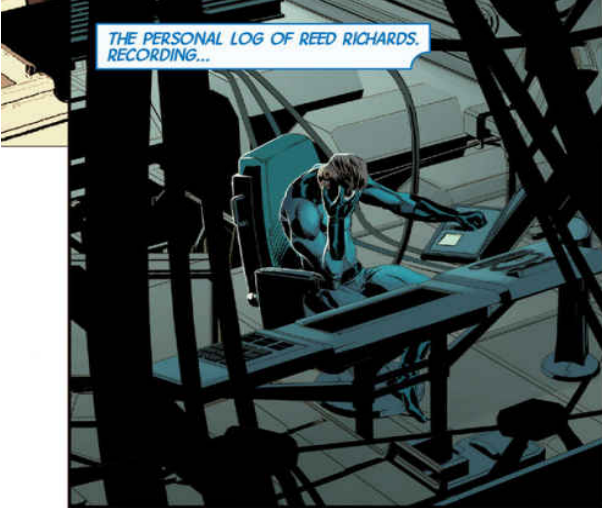
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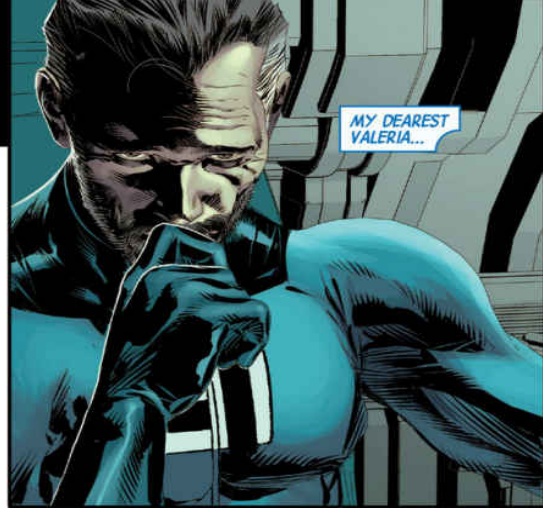
ILLUMINATI SAFEHOUSE.
CADIZ, SPAIN.



THE PERSONAL LOG OF REED RICHARDS.
RECORDING...



MY DEAREST
VALERIA...

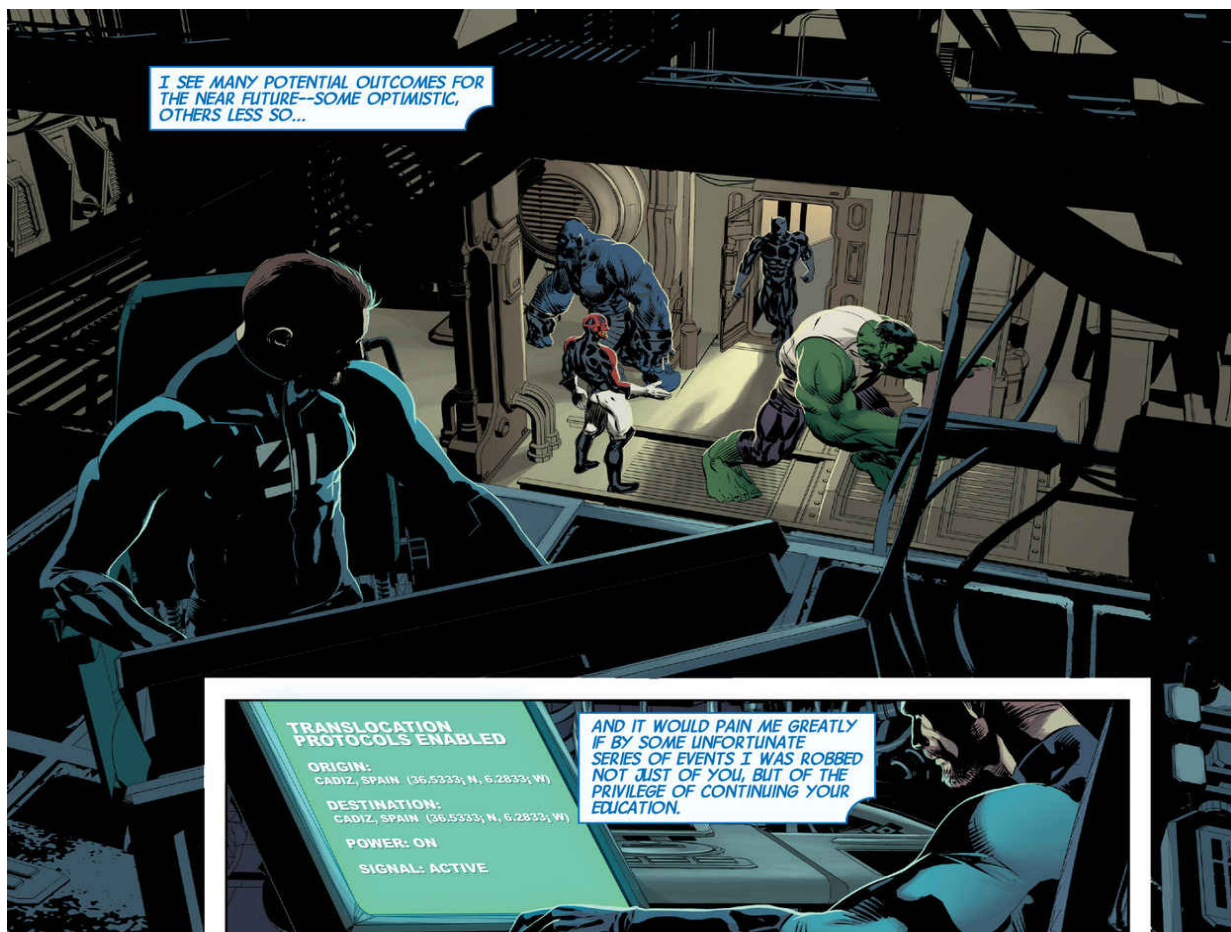


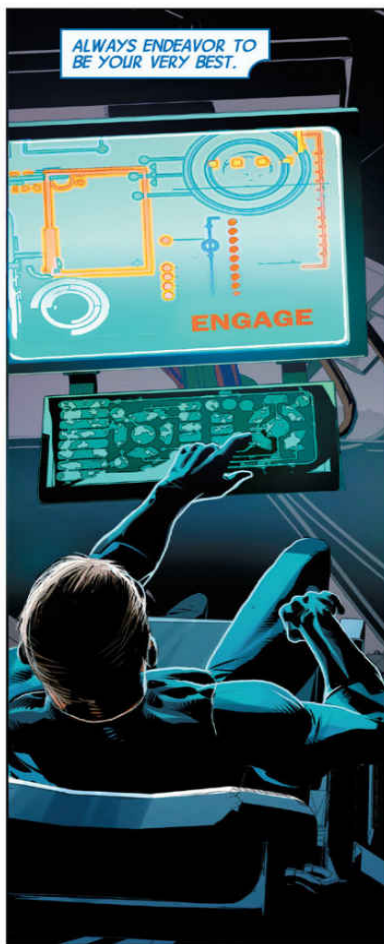
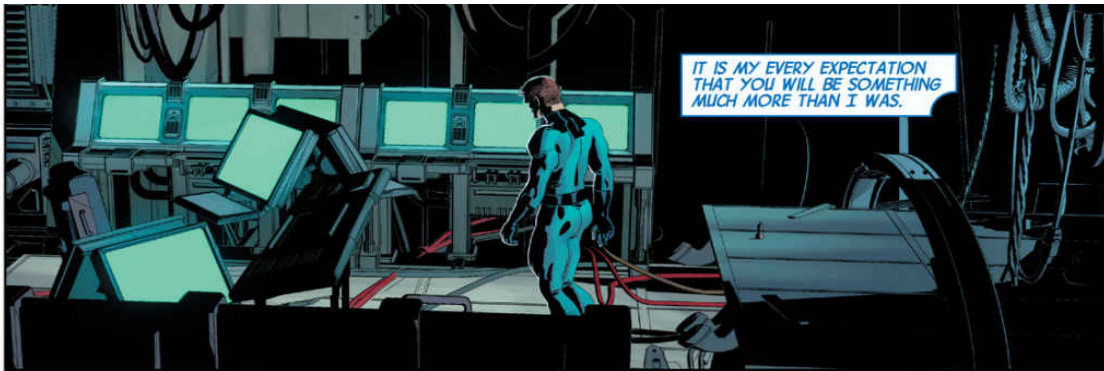
TODAY, I AM FILLED
WITH REGRETS, BUT
I'VE SO VERY LITTLE
TIME FOR THEM.



ALMOST NONE
AT ALL.









WE'VE
GOT A
HIT.

TRANSLOCATED
SIGNAL. TRIANGULATING...
IBERIAN PENINSULA.

NARROWING...

SOMEWHERE
ON THE COAST
OF SPAIN.
LOOKS LIKE...

CADIZ.
THEY'RE IN
CADIZ.

THEY'RE
IN RANGE,
SIR!

OKAY.

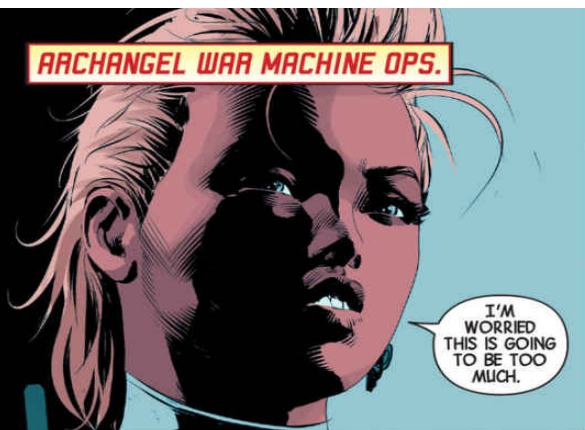
DEPLOY
THE DRONES.
LET'S GO
GET THEM.

ARCHANGEL HELICARRIER WING.
LOCATED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

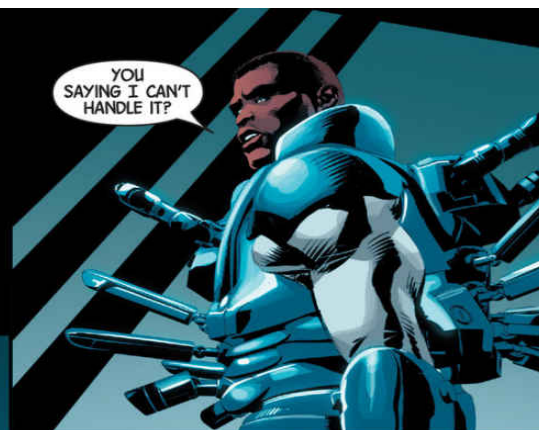




ARCHANGEL WAR MACHINE OPS.



I'M WORRIED THIS IS GOING TO BE TOO MUCH.



YOU SAYING I CAN'T HANDLE IT?



I'M SAYING, RHODEY, THAT I REMEMBER YOU TELLING ME WHAT KIND OF *HEADACHE* THIS THING GAVE YOU WHEN YOU PRACTICED RUNNING *TEN* WAR MACHINES.

AND BY HEADACHE, I MEAN THAT... PLUS THE PRETTY FIERCE NOSEBLEED.

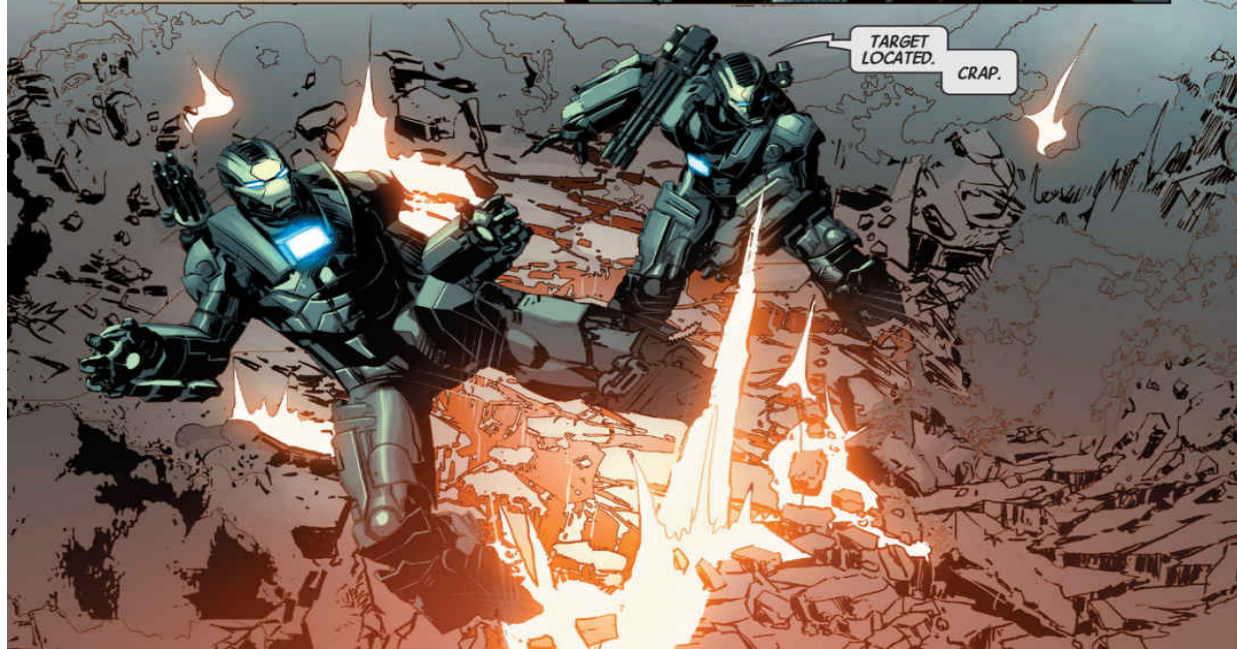
THIS IS... MORE.



TWO MINUTES LATER.

LAUNCH.









FOR EXAMPLE: IT'S BEEN SAID MANY TIMES THAT IF YOU WAIT FOR ALL THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO MAKE A CORRECT DECISION, THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ANY DECISION AT ALL MIGHT HAVE PASSED YOU BY.



OKAY. I THINK THEY'RE SUITABLY DISTRACTED.

YOU CAN COME OUT NOW.



OF COURSE, THE OPPOSITE OF THAT IDEA IS THE UNCOMPLICATED MAXIM: GO WITH YOUR GUT.



THE ARGUMENT THERE BEING "INSTINCT IS AN EVOLUTIONARY GOOD BET"—WHICH IS TRUE, UNTIL YOU RUN INTO SOMETHING, OR SOMEONE, A LITTLE HIGHER UP THE FOOD CHAIN...

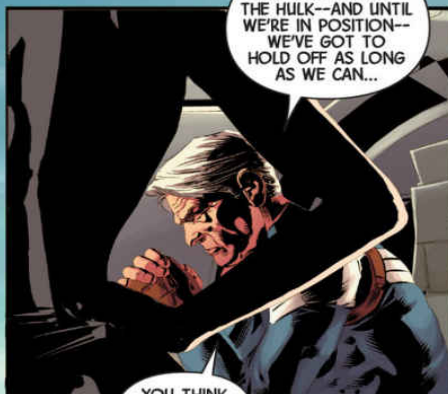
OR, IN SOME INSTANCES, MAYBE JUST A BIT MORE HUNGRY.



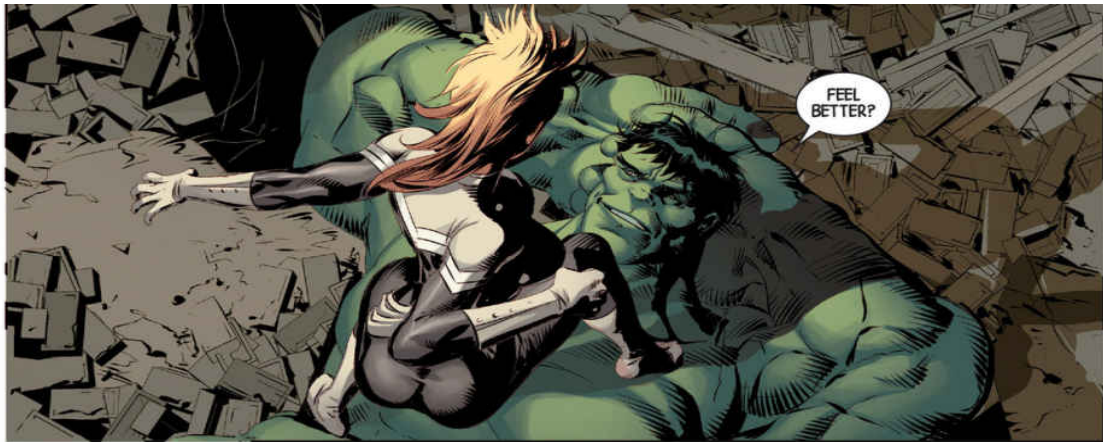
MOST PEOPLE—EVEN GIFTED ONES LIKE YOURSELF—TEND TO FAVOR ONE OF THESE TWO PRINCIPLES, BUT THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS AN AMALGAMATION...

AR











PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IS THE TOOL MOST OFTEN USED BY ANYONE STANDING IN OPPOSITION TO YOU ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS. MANIPULATION, ULTIMATUMS, THE THREAT OF PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL HARM...THESE ARE TOOLS OF RESISTANCE.

AND WHILE THEY MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO STOP YOU, LIKE BARNACLES ON A SHIP, THEY ARE ENOUGH TO CAUSE DRAG AND PUT YOUR GOALS IN PERIL. YOU MUST AT ALL TIMES MAINTAIN COMPOSURE.



NOW I WANT TO WARN YOU, VALERIA, THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL NOT UNDERSTAND THIS DISPASSION. THEY WILL CALL YOU COLD AND UNFEELING... WHICH IS UNTRUE.



I CAN'T GET THROUGH... THE MOBILE NULL FIELD--

AH, YES...OKAY. RECALIBRATING YOUR COMM.

THAT SHOULD DO IT, HENRY. NOW YOU CAN--

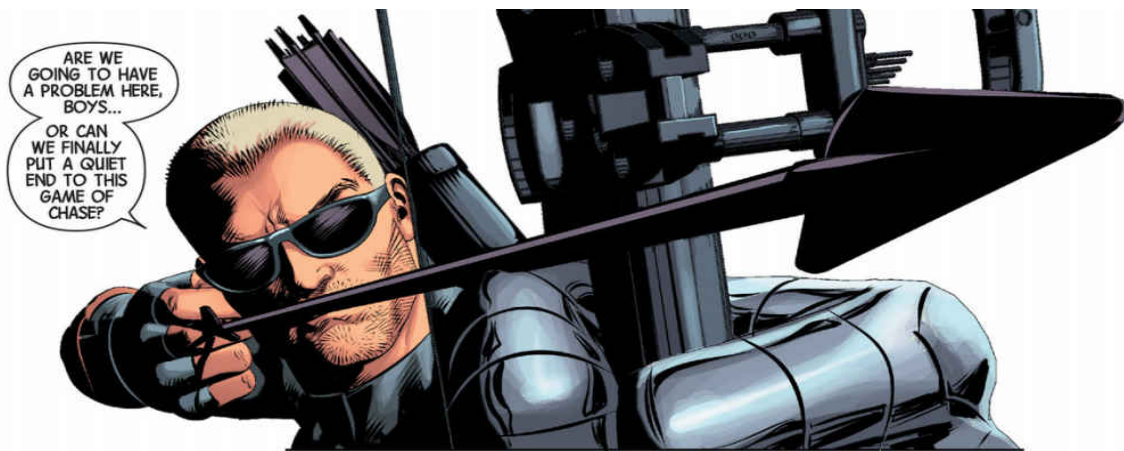


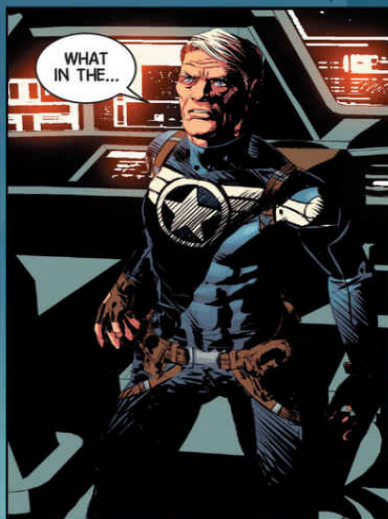
ARRGH!

HURK!

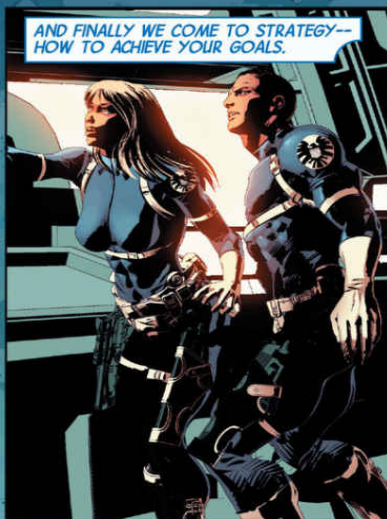
WE FEEL AS MUCH AS ANYONE. WE HURT. WE CRY.

BUT WE KEEP IT IN CHECK UNTIL... LATER.





WHAT
IN THE...



AND FINALLY WE COME TO STRATEGY--
HOW TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS.

I WON'T BOTHER GOING INTO LIMITED SCENARIOS FOR
CLEARLY DEFINED OPPONENTS OR SITUATIONS. THESE
ARE SIMPLE AND YOU ARE WELL BEYOND NEEDING YOUR
FATHER'S ADVICE ON HANDLING THOSE...

ATTENTION:
AGENTS OF
S.H.I.E.L.D.



BUT WHEN FACING A WELL-SEASONED OR TRULY
GIFTED OPPONENT, YOU MUST ALWAYS ATTEMPT
TO REDEFINE YOUR OPPONENT'S BASE
UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENCOUNTER.

YOU ATTACK
THEIR PRIMARY
HYPOTHESES.

FOR EXAMPLE: IF THERE IS AN EXPECTATION
THAT A CONFLICT IS BETWEEN TWO PARTIES--
ONE OF THEM BEING YOURS...

THE FIRST THING
YOU DO...

IS INTRODUCE
A THIRD.

THIS IS
THE AVENGERS
ORDERING YOU
TO STAND
DOWN.

TO BE CONTINUED IN NEW AVENGERS #28!

IN 5 MONTHS ... TIME RUNS OUT!



MARVEL

**HICKMAN
DEODATO
MARTIN**

028

PREVIOUSLY



WHACK!



S.H.I.E.L.D. AVENGERS



STEVE
ROGERS



HAWKEYE



MARIA
HILL



WAR MACHINE



INVISIBLE
WOMAN



CAPTAIN
AMERICA



CAPTAIN
MARVEL

THE ILLUMINATI



BEAST



HULK/
DOC GREEN



REED
RICHARDS



BLACK
BOLT



BLACK
PANTHER



CAPTAIN
BRITAIN



AMADEUS
CHO



IRON MAN



DOCTOR
STRANGE

NEW AVENGERS



SUNSPOT



CANNONBALL



SMASHER



MANIFOLD



BLACK WIDOW



SPIDER-
WOMAN



SHANG-CHI



VALIDATOR



POD



ZEBRA KIDS

MULTIVERSAL AVENGERS



HYPERION



ODINSON



STARBRAND



NIGHTMASK



ABYSS



EX NIHILO

THE CABAL



NAMOR



THANOS



BLACK SWAN



TERRAX



MAXIMUS



PROXIMA
MIDNIGHT



CORVUS
GLAIVE



“YOU CAN’T WIN” PART II

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CADIZ, SPAIN.
THE AIRSPACE ABOVE
AN ILLUMINATI SAFEHOUSE.

I KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
THINKING...







"DEPLOY THE PACKAGE."

OKAY, IT'S TIME.

LET'S GO.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE DOING THIS.

IT'S WRONG.

ORDERS ARE ORDERS, PAL. AND IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING...

IF YOU REALLY FELT THAT WAY, I THINK YOU'D BE A LITTLE MORE OUTRAGED.

I DON'T REALLY HAVE A CHOICE IN THE MATTER.

WELL, US EITHER.

OFF YOU GO.

HELLO, DOCTOR, YOU MUST BE GETTING TIRED OF SITTING IN THAT CELL ALL DAY, EVERY DAY.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A TRIP? GET OUTSIDE? MAYBE GET A LITTLE EXERCISE?

SOUNDS GREAT, I SAID. ANY CHANCE OF SOME DECENT SCENERY. SOMETHING OF A VIEW?

OH, THEY SAID IT'LL TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY.

SIGH.

DIRECTOR HILL...

PACKAGE DEPLOYED.



PACKAGE
ON ITS WAY,
STEVE.

BUT I GOTTA
ASK, SHOULDN'T
I FEEL A BIT GUILTY
ABOUT JUST THROWING
A GUY OFF THE
SIDE OF A
HELICARRIER?



HIS ALTERNATE-
WORLD GENOCIDAL
AVENGERS CAME
HERE FROM AN EARTH
THEY CONQUERED,
MARIA.

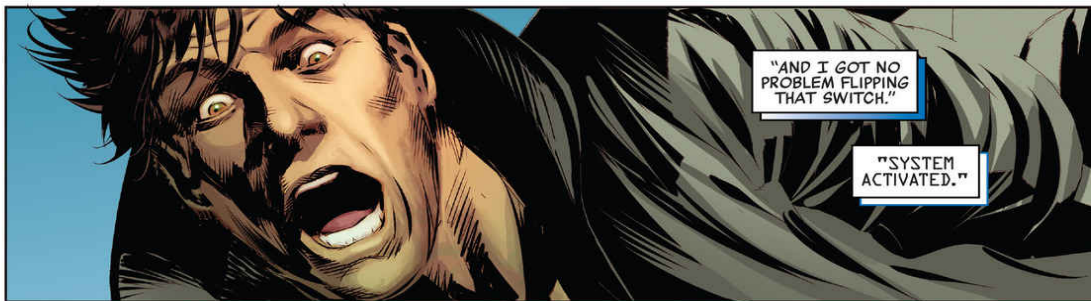
NO, I
DON'T FEEL
BAD.

SYSTEM
ARMED.



"IN FACT, I THINK THE
ACTIONS OF OUR FRIENDS
DOWN THERE ABSOLUTELY
MERIT A RUN-IN WITH AN
EMOTIONALLY NEUTERED,
SOCIOPATH BANNER.

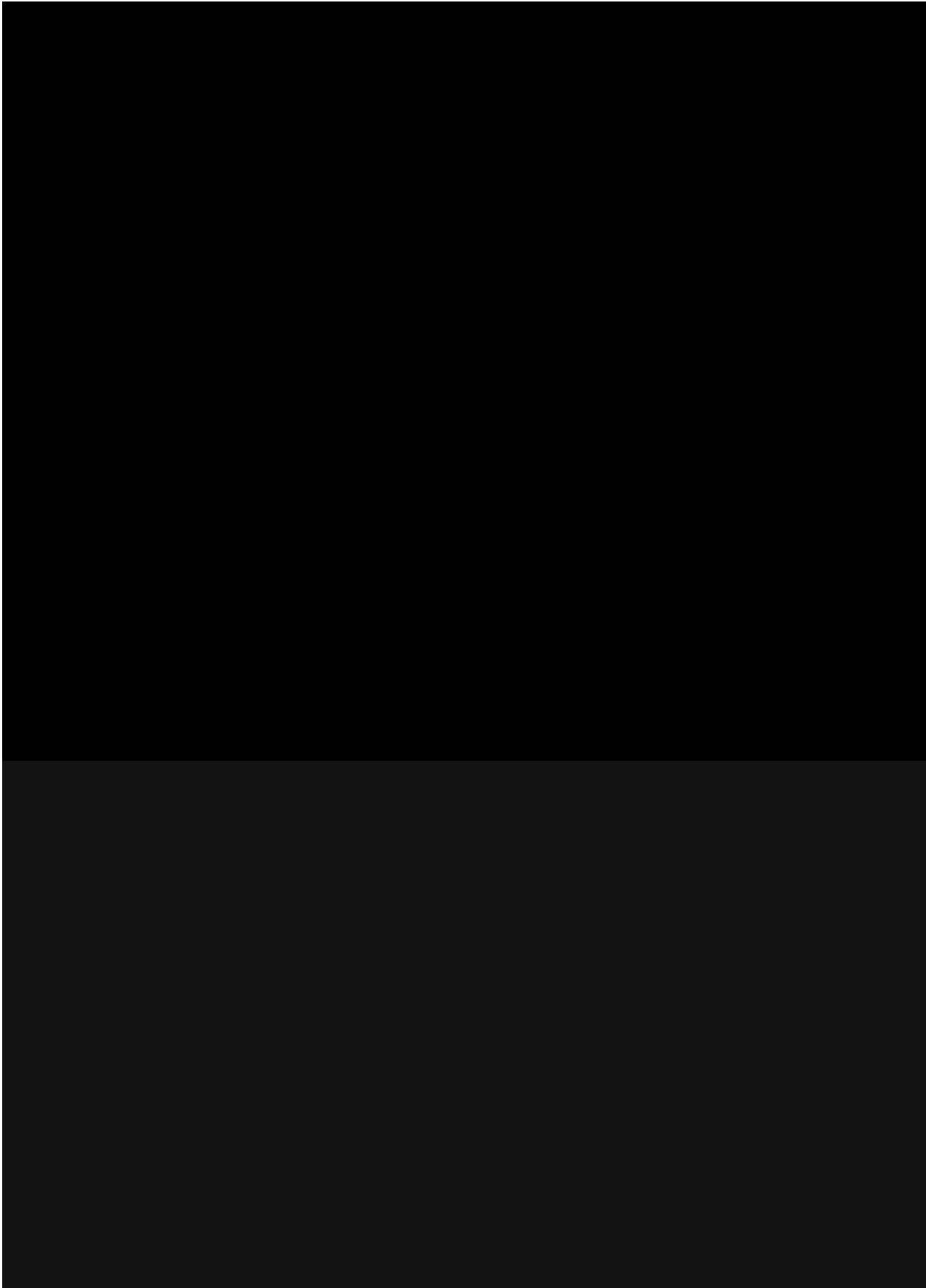
"MAKING THAT
HAPPEN IS JUST A
MATTER OF SIGNALING
HIS IMPLANTED
CONTROL NODE.



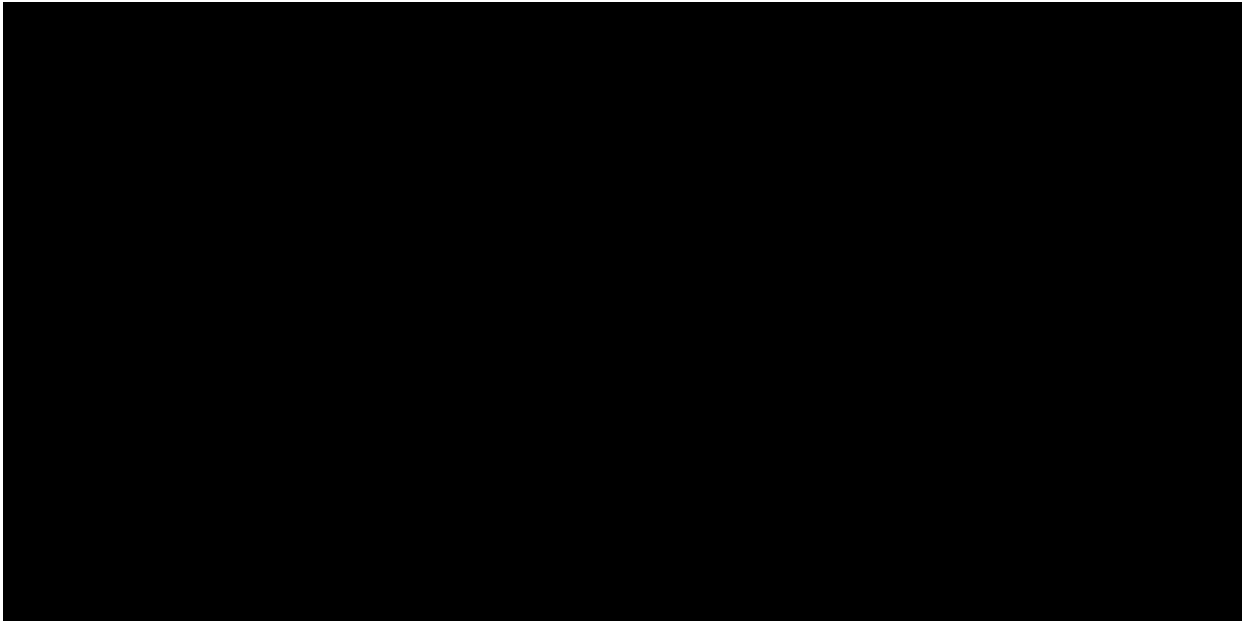
"AND I GOT NO
PROBLEM FLIPPING
THAT SWITCH."

"SYSTEM
ACTIVATED."





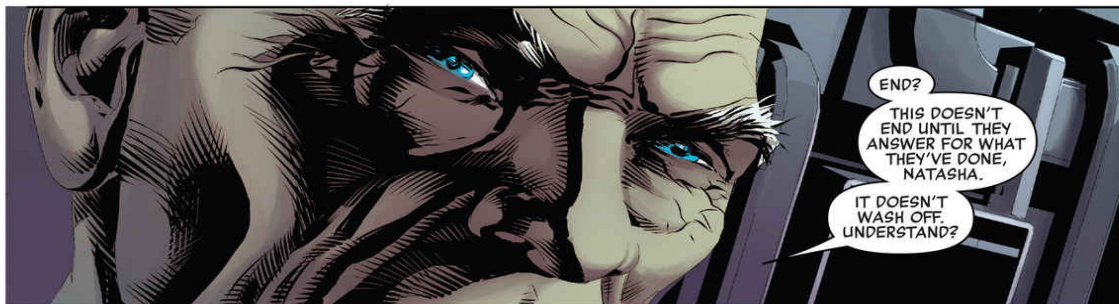


















**CAPTAIN
AMERICA**

**LUKE
CAGE**

**WHITE
TIGER**

**SHE-
HULK**

**SPIDER-
MAN**

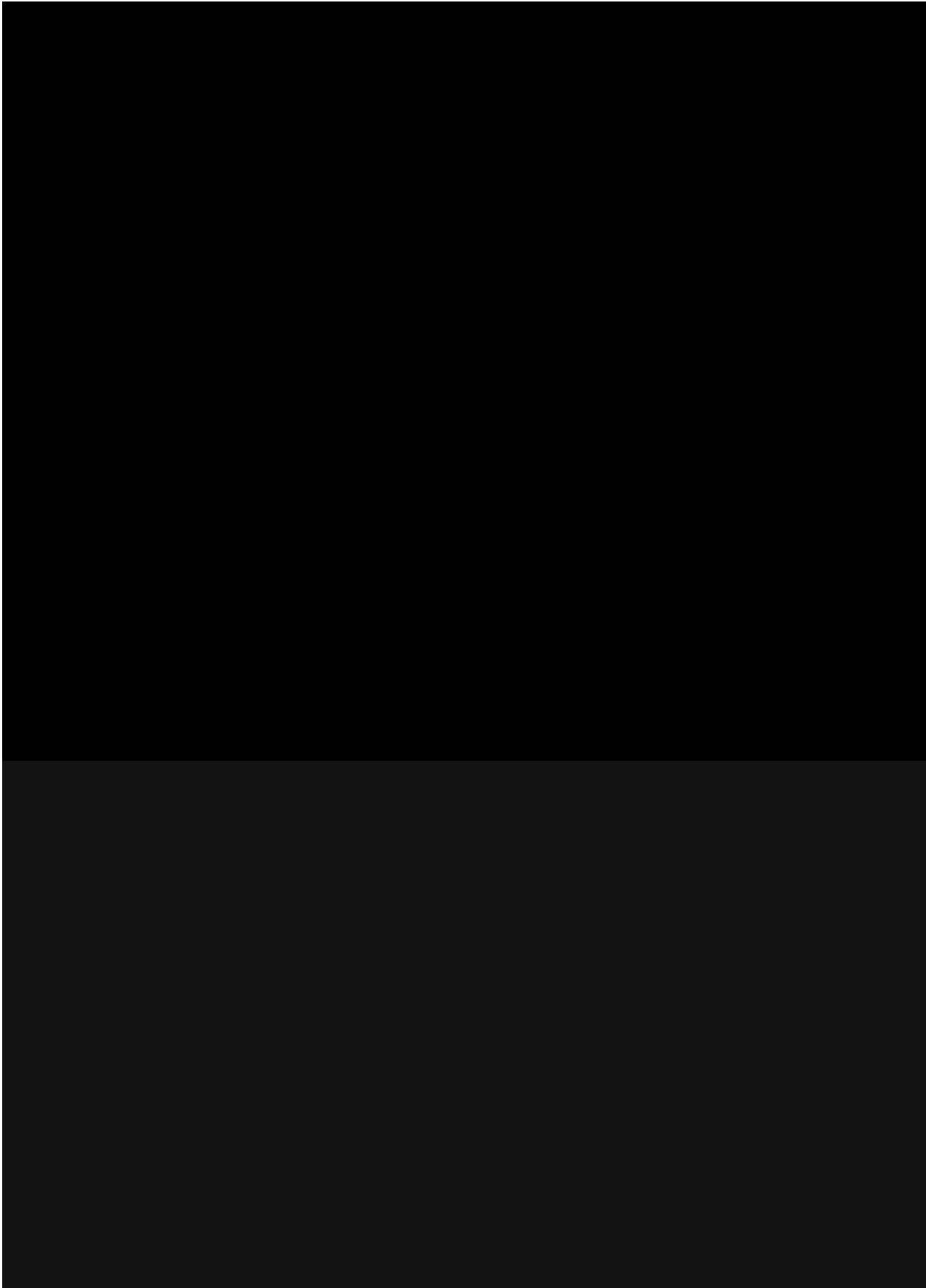
**BLUE
MARVEL**

**POWER
MAN**

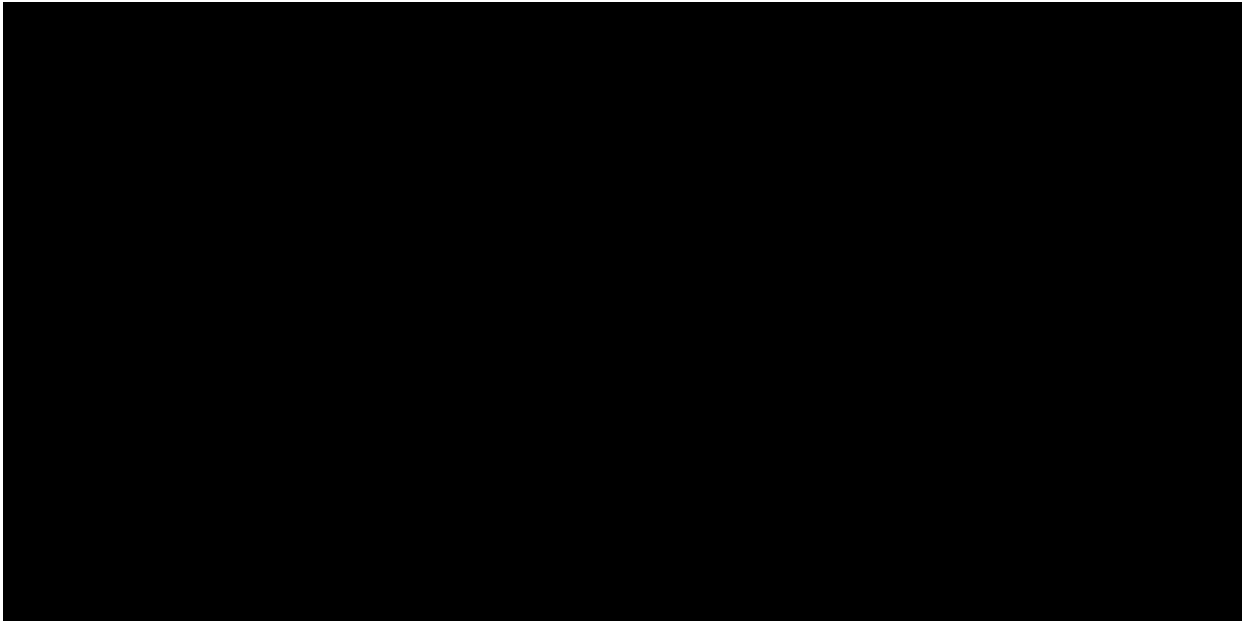
SPECTRUM

THE PROLONGED OBJECT
OF ANY PLAN IS NOT
TO GET WHAT YOU WANT,
BUT TO DISCOVER WHAT
YOUR OPPONENT IS
CAPABLE OF.

WHAT YOU ARE
INTERESTED IN
IS GAUGING THEIR
RESPONSE TO
YOUR ACTIONS.







BUT EVEN GIVEN THAT, IF THE HULK WOULD HAVE BEEN HIS SOLE RESPONSE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A FUTILE EFFORT AS HE WOULD HAVE EXPOSED HIS TRUE INTENTIONS TOO EARLY FOR THE NUMBER OF VARIABLES AT PLAY.



BUT THIS IS STEVE ROGERS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, VALERIA...SO IT WAS NOT.



THE HULK DID SERVE AS AN EXCELLENT BRANCHING SCENARIO, ENABLING CAPTAIN ROGERS TO HOLD DOWN TWO FRONTS (S.H.I.E.L.D. ENGAGED WITH THE AVENGERS WORLD, WHILE HE ENGAGED WITH US).



IN FACT, HAD HE NOT SUFFERED CONSIDERABLE LOSSES MAINTAINING A ZONE OF CONFLICT (PREVENTING US FROM AN EARLY TACTICAL RETREAT VIA TRANSLOCATOR), THE HULK GAMBIT MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MAKING US INTRODUCE OUR ASSETS INTO THE FIELD EARLIER THAN DESIRED.



BUT HE DID SUFFER LOSSES, SO HE WAS FORCED TO INTRODUCE A FOURTH PARTY--HIS SECRET AVENGERS.

YOU!



IMMENSELY POWERFUL, TACTICALLY VARIED, AN EXCELLENT STRATEGEM, BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, HIS LAST PIECE AVAILABLE ON THE BOARD.



IT'S OVER, RICHARDS!

TIME TO PAY!

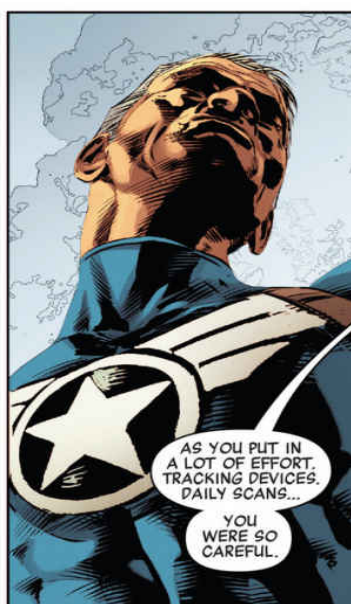
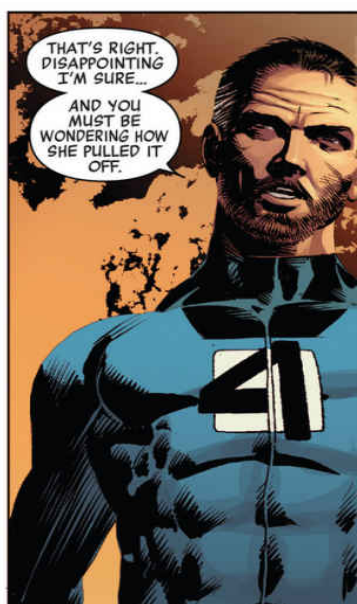


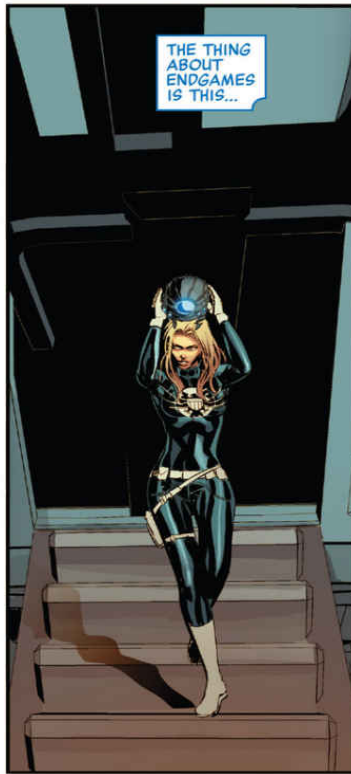
HAVEN'T WE ALL PAID ENOUGH THIS TIME?

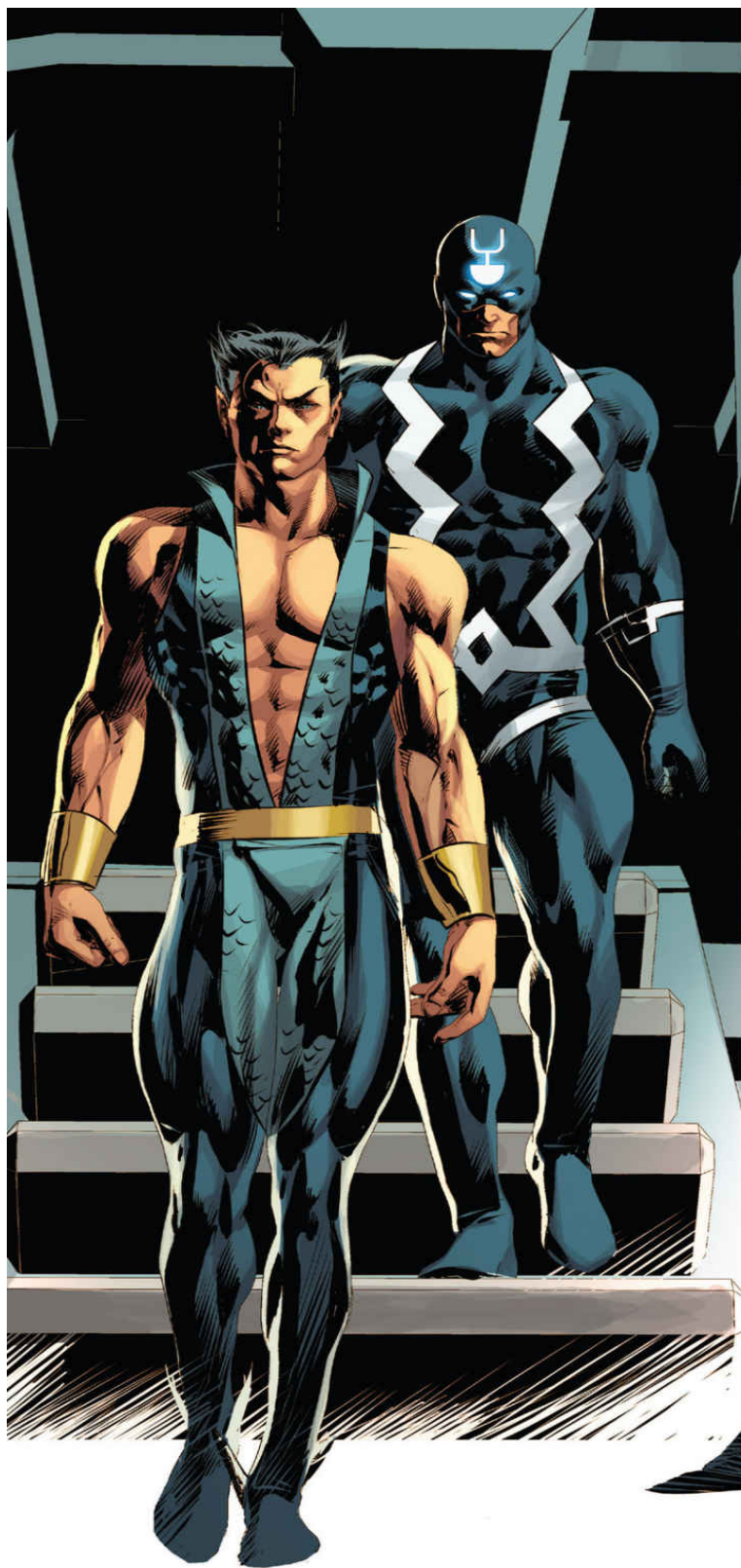
REMEMBER, AS I SAID EARLIER, THE OBJECT OF ANY PLAN IS NOT TO GET WHAT YOU WANT, BUT TO DISCOVER WHAT YOUR OPPONENT IS CAPABLE OF...



AND ONCE YOU KNOW THAT, YOU CAN MANIPULATE THE BOARD TO ENGINEER, AND MANAGE, A SUCCESSFUL ENDGAME.







YOU SHOW
THEM WHAT
THEY DIDN'T.



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